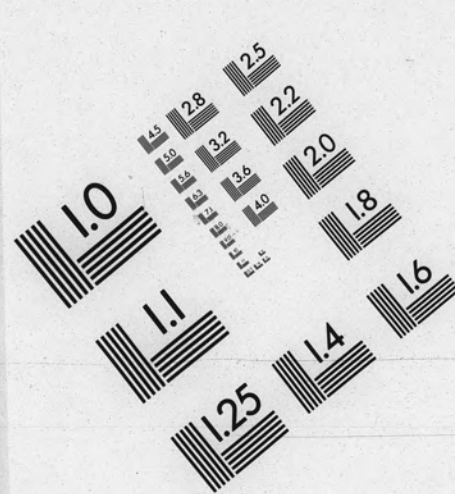


# Journal, 1955.

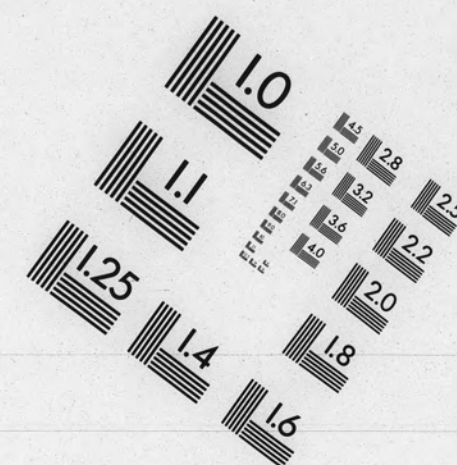




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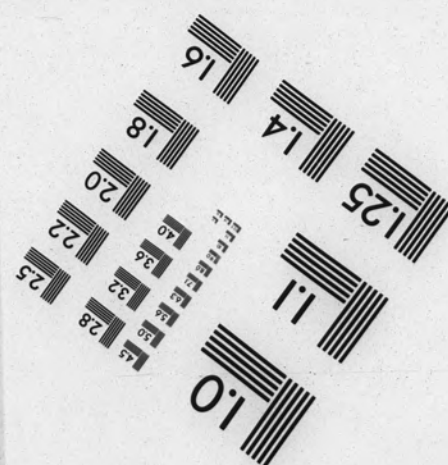
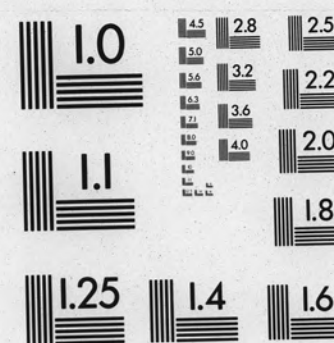
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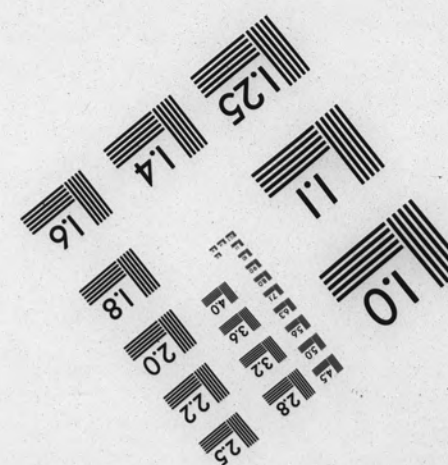
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7123

JOURNAL OF FRANCOIS MIGNON

— 1955 —

7124

7124

Sunday, January 2nd, 1955.

Memorandum: to the Honorable Mr. [illegible]

Yesterday and today have seemed distinctly odd, what with  
no road runners to barge in on this sylvan solitude or on the few  
appointments granted as a special favor to acquaintances from town.

Everyone except little Miss Willard must have been in too  
much of a hurry to arrive at the Crescent City to permit dawdling  
along the wayside and once the Navy had trounced Mississippi, all  
the out of State travelers must have been so flattened they couldn't  
get out of New Orleans or if they did, they must have had enough of  
leaving for one week end and so drove slap back whence they came, -  
North Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas and so on. Whatever the reason, I  
was lucky and this in spite of perfect blue and gold weather yesterday  
and today, warm weather today. All small favors are gratefully acknow-  
ledged and I'm delighted to have had an opportunity to devote quite a  
lot of time and energy to desk work over the week end.  
When the postman encounters the batch of stuff I hand him in the  
morning, he may suffer from momentary jitters, thinking  
the holiday season has slipped back on him. I know  
the enclosure from that Marshall woman speaks for itself more  
on less. I sent her the Igor Bousnel address from memory, which  
I hope was correct, although as she had not only lost his letter but  
one he had written to me also, I got the impression her memory ought  
to have been almost as good as mine, or perhaps she was merely us-  
ing this side exit for time to cover an acknowledgement she should have  
written herself. Here is the question, too, as to why she didn't write her  
letter to the gentleman, addressing him simply as Dear Sir, and  
enclosing it in her letter to me so that I might address the envelope  
and drop it in the mail. Be that as it may, I wrote the gentleman  
and sent Carolyn a copy of my letter and from that point on, she con-  
tacted him on his own as she pleased. I should say that in re-  
sponding to her report from North Hollywood, I couldn't  
remind her as of last February that I had grave misgivings as to  
.....



7125

much being accomplished through the scheme of "every other chapter" she and Farley had worked out. I added that I thought it would be sheer common sense to drop Marie Therese for the moment, at least and to barge ahead on some sort of a Cane River pictorial book. I even went so far as to suggest there: -

Cane River Louisiana's Forgotten Plantation Paradise

The Cane River Mulatto

The Cane River Negro.

What with her impending round with Sister Frances Jerome into the homes of the mulattoes and what with other material already to hand in films, it strikes me, I pointed out, that we have at least three unhatched eggs kicking around and I think we ought to "set on them slay."

Well, we shall see....but probably very little.

What with her impending round with Sister Frances Jerome into the homes of the mulattoes and what with other material already to hand in films, it strikes me, I pointed out, that we have at least three unhatched eggs kicking around and I think we ought to "set on them slay."

Following the Murrow broadcast, I took off a couple of hours to turn again through the lovely pages of the Illustration issues. They are so beautiful and so many of the pages hold so many ideas. Like my record of La Fontaine Fables, these are going to provide me with so many happy hours in the days ahead. And in closing, I think I need scarcely add how many good wishes for 1955 are flowing the direction of Lyme.....

7126

Monday, January 3rd, 1955.

And so our Uncle Samuel's messenger made his initial round of 1955. I wanted to mention to you before putting this letter to the post that I was so nice being able to examine some of the things that you brought me.

He brought me one letter, yours of the 29th, and it goes without saying I was altogether delighted, both with this ideal start of the New Year but doubly so because it brought the news that you were taking a day off, and that's the best news that could possibly come to hand. And may I thank you for giving me such a splendid glimpse of your holiday season and how things turned, including what sounded something like a hurly-burly in the matter of coming and goings as among your neighbors. It's so wonderful to have close friends living near by but I can well imagine that on certain occasions, an ivory tower has its advantages, too.

And may I thank you for telling me of the Santa section and how things turned, and it all sounded so delightful, especially the Mcopper Bottom section. Those are really marvelous pieces and I can well imagine how much pleasure the one reaching you is going to provide in the culinary department.

And I was touched by your reference to the "cherry robe". Sometime I should love to see anything stemming from Lyme. Lyme would delight me more than from any other direction and the connotation of the "cherry robe" seems to hold something doubly special. I think, however, that both little Miss Lee and Leston speak the same language when contemplating a discussion of gift that are announced in their respective directions. What makes their personality equally original is the fact that they incline to leave it to others to save certain people things like tall green glasses, candles, both real and lovely greeting cards, illustrations, etc., as a way of providing the soul with things, not mandatory for ordinary people, perhaps, but terribly important in what otherwise would be a somewhat prosaic world of speaking of Illustration, may I tell you how much I appreciate it.



7127

your thoughtfulness if translating the particulars about the stained glass. I found it so exciting and again I consulted the Illustration article and then looked up the article in Life (Life) magazine, - I think it is the December 13th issue whose cover carries the likeness of the Holy Papa. You may recall that in that issue there was an article about Matisse, along with picture and the one fitted so nicely in with the other that I was delighted all over again to turn back to the Illustration.

ut before quitting Life, I wanted to mention the Peter Bruegel reproductions, too. It was so nice being able to examine some of them both in their complete layout and in some of the enlargements of sections thereof.

The use of the word, enlargement, recalls to mind the picture made by William Hughes on his last trip here, -- the one showing the west end of the African House with the wall and the roof, as I recall, just covering the entire film. I couldn't make out the small picture he very well and so cannot say if it is interesting or not. He next told you run across it, if you will notice if you think it would be amazing when enlarged. I should be glad if you would let me know. I want to get him to blow up a couple for me but the heifer from Little Rock, Sarasota knocked that out, I guess.

It was good of you to acquaint me with office doings and particularly how this year's gesture in the Santa direction was so different and in the proper direction. And how typical of little Miss Lee that she made the whole business bounce in the direction of an Arendbourg birthday.

Your mention of the unusual warmth in Manhattan during Christmas week suggests that you, too, might have made use of the Tender Leaf and Junco, even as I did. I presume your December "summer" didn't hold through until January, as I heard mention of snow on the radio coming up State, New York. But here the mass of warm air continues streaming Northward, as it is said as far as Kansas and today's cloudiness was accompanied by readings in the 70's and I have my doors and windows open to get full measure of the damp freshness and the rays of the waxing moon which is lovely tonight through fleecy gauze. I need scarcely add, I suppose that after attending to some mail, there will be Tender Leaf again in the heartiest of the tall green glads, the one I am pleased to style in reaching for it, "Le bourdon".

My little cardinal sitting along side, adds further happiness to this little chat with you and after I have knocked off a few letters I propose turning out the light and contemplating the White Garden as I play mein lieber Pieter Illyovitch's Nutcracker Suite before bringing this day that Lyme has made so happy to a close.....

7128

Tuesday, January 4th, 1955.

divorce to want to divorce runs from their chosen way of life. I report the matter because I suppose it is rare for somebody like me merely oporunimated but I think the general idea is clear. could come and live like Joiks. The precise words Clarence used

Memorandum: The Tender Leaf Tea weather continues. It was cloudy this morning but all clear this afternoon with the thermometer in the upper 70's. We are promised a reading of between 78 and 80 for the morrow. But one of these days Jack Frost will be making his rounds and what a frolic with the foliage he is going to have. I concentrated my gardening during the morning hours and although the dew was heavy, one didn't get soaked from pure sweat in hauling cotton hulls to spread in generous heaps about the flower beds and more delicate trees for their protection against possible cold snaps and for additional fertilization as the stuff decomposes.

My afternoon was fairly busy with people and that I got no time to finish a letter from Carolyn. Between jumps, however, I did read enough to learn she has put off her Manhattan visit until February, which, in a way, came as no surprise. The surprise, in fact, will come if she makes it in February. There was some talk about coming to Melrose the third week in January instead of the 4th. I had supposed she was coming on the 11th, and something about me skipping up to Old Pointa to give her some ideas after which she would bring me home. There was something about Helen possibly coming to Marshall at the same time. How she got into the picture, I couldn't imagine, but, I suppose, on the general theory that none can be accomplished in landscaping ideas if extra people are present. I shall try to read the letter tomorrow and see what sense I can make out of it.

Clemence came to see me. She was looking for a fancy Christmas box in which she could put some candy she was going to make. She said Sister Frances Jerome had passed her way day before yesterday and had stopped to chat with her. She said she told her that I was helping her so much with her work and after they had talked a little Clemence told me that she liked her so much that she kept telling herself that she was coming over to see me after she had gone and was going to get me to see if we couldn't get her out of all that Church business she was tangled up in so she



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could come and live like folks. The precise words Clemence used are merely approximated but I think the general idea is clear. I report the matter because I suppose it is rare for somebody like Clemence to want to divorce nuns from their chosen way of life.

And then Mr. and Mrs. Marshall Hicks appeared, or rather I bumped into them, strolling about the gardens. Nobody had reported their presence and I was glad to chat with them. I believe he is the person of whom Mrs. Stirling has frequently spoken. Lyle had told me the Hicks menage and I had heard him mention them so often, I almost felt I knew them. I believe Marshall is doing some of the Oakley restoration work on some such Mrs. Hicks said she thought much of the see-sawing at Oakley during Mrs. Stirling's regime was over a difference of viewpoint, Mrs. Stirling thinking much of the furniture in the house when acquired by the State should be preserved as opposed to others, perhaps Mr. Hicks, who thought, as it was to be an Audubon museum, it should be restored to a pure 1820 period and everything else eliminated.

As the Hicks contingent was leaving, the Reverend Fathers from across the river came to pay me a New Year's call. Father Calahan has been a way for a month or two in Michigan, I believe. In the course of our chat over a glass of port, one of the gentlemen remarked that it was interesting how J. H. can travel so far and somehow, in spite of his speed, gather up and retain still so many particulars. I observed that although I had chatted with him two or three times about his trip, he somehow had never mentioned visiting either Bangkok or Rangoon although I had heard indirectly that he had been to both places. At that Father Calahan volunteered a side light he thought I would like. He pointed out that J. H. in a somewhat snap judgement, had observed that the people in the Far East were so grasping and that one could never count on them, immediately after which, and obvious not thinking of what, at least, an exception if would prove, he went on to say that a day or two before reaching Rangoon, he sent ahead a message by someone who was arriving a day or two before he was in Rangoon. J. H. sent ahead a message by this traveler, addressing the note to Christian and attaching a dollar to the note with the request that the traveler give same to a messenger in Rangoon with instructions to deliver it to the French Embassy. When, a couple of days later, J. H. reached the Rangoon air port, there was Christian, holding the note and the dollar, still attached. Perhaps they can't be trusted but in one instance, at least, J. H. didn't get cheated.....

1617

7130

Wednesday, January 5th, 1955.

Memorandum: How nice to find your New Year's Eve letter in today's post. It was so good to have good wishes from Lyme which is really the only place from which they could come that would mean everything. And thanks so much for acquainting me with so many aspects of the holiday season. Perhaps because I go in for unusually small parties on New Year's Eve, one less and nobody would be present, - I somehow assume that everybody might find such festivities the happier in proportion to the smallness of participants in such festivities.

And thanks much for hearing the enclosed greeting from a mutual friend. It should make any day the brighter to encounter the smile of a gentleman of the twin whence it came that I come to think about recall how formerly the set-up across the fence used to put me in mind of that somewhat unexpected combination and in both cases, the major portion of sympathy somehow inclines in the direction of the husband. Our Tender Leaf Tea weather continues and the flowering quinces are putting out their blossoms and today I discovered a young army of ants on the lawn in back of Dr. Miller's cabin, as busy as bees and erecting a fine mound about a foot across, as though the winter had ended. I would have supposed that ants would have better sense.

And before leaving the matter of the holidays, I would say I haven't seen Madam Regard alone since several days prior to December 25th. Shortly after Celeste's return from Europe, I was given to understand she had in mind something special by way to send to Lyme at holiday time but she didn't say what. Knowing her somewhat original concepts in this field, I should be surprised at nothing I heard concerning what eventually transpired by way of a gift.

I am so glad you mentioned the matter of Illustrations and how completely you expressed my own feelings in voicing your own. It is also nice to know that Plaisir de France came through again with another lovely number and my days will be the more gay in just thinking about it. ....



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I have been impressed recently by the number of half hour boradoc  
originating in Washington, for the most part political, which appear  
to be growing in number from month to month under various program  
titles. "Meet the Press" continues to be my favorite and about  
the only one of those I have heard which I found rather drab was  
the session in which V. K. Wellington Koo was up for a go-round.  
And that wasn't V. K.'s fault but rather my utter lack of enthusiasm  
the king pins in the Formosa Government. Among other  
programs of similar vein, that one originated by Theodore Granic or so  
such seems pretty good and there is the Capitol Cloakroom, of course,  
and along the same pattern, one broadcast from Des Moines in which  
Western Senators usually participate and Senator Ellender records a  
weekly chat in Washington and that is broadcast over WWL, New Orleans  
a week.

Last night, by sheer chance, I heard another, --a National progro  
thing (NBC) in which Pearl Metzgar chatted over coffee cups in her  
Sheraton-Park Hotel suite with a radio interviewer. Celeste would  
have loved it, there was so much about parties. But in spite  
of the frills, there were some portions I found entertaining, especial  
when the lady was talking about Luxembourg and her visit to Russia.

My afternoon was taken up in large measure by people, pleasant  
enough but a little wearing on my patience as I had wanted to garden.  
When the last person had left, I glanced at the clock and noticed  
I had 15 minutes before the supper bell would ring and I accordingly  
dashed off the enclosed sheet in the first paragraph of which, I belie  
I referred to Blythe and Nathalie Scott as having passed this way on  
January 5th, 1951. This sheet touches slightly on the death of the  
youth on December 19th, which I mentioned in a memo a week or so back.

The supper bell rang and J. H., Pat, Eugene and I sat down when  
voices were heard on the front gallery. J. H. got up and called some  
Doc and urged them to come in. I assumed Doc indicated the Wenks.  
As I arose, the lady came up to me with an embrace. As coincidences can  
be fun, I was both astonished and delighted to discover the lady to be  
brother than Nathalie Scott and with her with were Dr. Rand and Blythe,  
four years to the day since the last time I had seen Nathalie.

They joined us for supper and I was glad to see they enjoyed Zelt  
nice hot biscuits and the pork chops were cooked to a turn and the  
French fried potatoes were unusually good. And some could enjoy the  
food with the conversation with was on the light side and gay. Natha  
said she had spent a couple of days with Martha Robinson in New Orleans  
and that the latter was threatening to honor me with a visit shortly.  
We sat for quite a while after supper chatting and it was real night  
departed. The letter from Lyme and the number from Tasko and the day  
out ever so pleasantly.....

8817

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Wed. 7

Thursday, January 6th, 1955.

Memorandum: word issues assistance, record editne  
Along about 5 o'clock this morning, Tender Leaf tea gave  
way to contented coca bean weather and although the sun shone  
brightly all day, the thermometer couldn't make it much above 50.  
Tonight it will slide down to about 34 and I shall enjoy reading  
a bit before going to bed, turning out the lights and lettigthe  
waxing moon enhance the glories of the White Garden.

Picture my surprise this morning when I received a response to  
a form letter I had written in September or October to a  
potential Hachez customer, the leading gift shop and stationer  
in that place. This appears to be the first egg of that setting  
to hatch and it goes without saying I am entranced to send them by  
tomorrow's post the dozen and a half plates they requested. Off  
hand, I should say it was about time for these item to start  
rolling so in today's post came the enclosed letter from Dora.  
How persistently he pursues a writer, once he gets started.  
In response, I shall recommend, in view of this enthusiasm for  
Flaubert, that he read Zweig's biography of Balzac which I  
have never read. My thought in doing this stems from two  
or three points, first, that if he likes Flaubert, he may  
like Flaubert's friend's writings, -- Honore de Balzac, --and he  
may end up by liking Zweig, too. Personally, I never got around  
to ead much from either Flaubert or Balzac because there was always  
so many other things, usually on the historical level, that  
appealed to me more.

And I was delighted to learn that Dora had stumbled over  
Colonel McCormick's broadcasts over WGN, Chicago, the Chicago  
Tribune radio station. Since the Colonel owns the Tribune, it  
probably isn't difficult for him to secure time on the Tribune  
station. I don't recall if I have ever mentioned the Colonel's  
Saturday night broadcasts along about 9 o'clock. They are  
especially thrilling because one has a sense with every one of his  
words that the Colonel is actually falling apart and that each  
word will be his last. Then, too, there is that unique ability  
on the Colonel's part to treat everything the way both the  
Tribune and the Daily News treats it, and you will admit, I think,  
that that is really remarkable. A year or so ago, I recall



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with what fascination I listened to his endless series on great American state papers in which he sometimes devoted one entire broadcast, sometimes several broadcasts to the State papers of all the Presidents from Washington to and including General or rather President Grant. What I liked especially was his vast admiration for the Grand Administration, -- surely the most scandalous in American History, and what I liked even better was the good Colonel's declaration that he would terminate this particular series with President Grant's State papers because "I have been unable to find anything of any interest or any value between the conclusion of President Grant's Administration and the end of the Franklin Roosevelt regime".

One assumes the Colonel didn't care so much for people like Wilson or F. D. R., although I am astonished he couldn't have found a lot of fine things to tickle him in the Harding Administration, being, as it was, so much like Grant's.

I was both sorry and glad to learn this morning of the death of Miss Kate Keator of Campti. Since last June she had been unable to swallow, having suffered from cancer for months prior to that time. Her physician told me she had been on a milk diet for the last 32 years. I don't know what a milk diet is exactly and I can't imagine why one should have to subsist on one over such an endless period.

While waiting for the 10 o'clock news last night, I fiddled around in the ether waves and came up with a tirade by Sam Morris, the prohibitionist, favorite of all tiraders among the colored folks who love to listen and laugh when he gets to going on Deamon. It seems to me this must have been a re-broadcast or perhaps the same speech re-delivered for some of it sounded might familiar. I especially liked the part where he held up his son as a shining example of noble young manhood, -- he is in his mid 20's, papa exemplified, going on to say that never in all his 20 odd years of living has he fasted a drop of beer or attended a movie. Strictly speaking, I suppose, you can't say that youth isn't alive but sue of the word "living" seems pretty strong under the circumstances.

Well, so much for this sitting and now I must whack out some mail and after that sample a new book whose title I know not, which came to hand today. I hope it makes harmonious listening to in view of the lousiness of the White Garden in moonlight....

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7134

Friday, January 7th, 1955.

#### Memorandum:

I wish you might see the African House at this moment. An immense golden wash tub like moon is rising on the Eastern horizon and the West end of the African House roof looks like a gigantic triangle cutting a great black slice of pie from the gold disk. There is something about it that balances in my mind with the gargoyle of Notre Dame cutting a sliver out of the same big bauble, so advantageously seen from along the quay.

And speaking of Notre Dame gets one around to the Madeleine and naturally Madame de Pompadour is just around the corner and I was enchanted to bump into her while reading last night, although the lady herself didn't appear although her name was mentioned.

How she got into the act was this way: I was reading a chapter about Adam Smith and his work, "Wealth of Nations" which was so remarkable at the time it was published in 1776. (Liberty Bell, please copy). It seems that Mr. Smith spent some time in Paris in 1764 and established a firm friendship with Dr. Quesnay, generally considered one of the best minds of his time, and Dr. Quesney, of course, was Madame de Pompadour's physician. It was pointed out that Mr. Smith got many ideas from the good doctor even as he did from B. Franklin, printer, after returning to England where said Franklin was doing tricks for the colonies, and incidentally, for Adam Smith, too, in preparations for his masterpiece that in a few years would make its bow at the same time those said colonies were making such a great racket over Philadelphia way. That's all there was about La Marquise, but I served to remind one of the lady and another of her associates.

At this moment, a party is in progress across the fence, -- celebrating Father Callahan's 77th birthday. I suppose some of the faithful of the Cane River gentry will be present, -- Hertzogs, e I received my invitation over the coffee cups this morning and it was generally understood, -- after all these years -- that I would not be likely to accept. That assumption, of course, was correct. And so this afternoon I picked a nice fat bouquet of dark blue hyacinthes and wrapped up a bottle of wine. I might get



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a credit mark in Heaven for the hyacinths which I really  
coveted but I can't look for any star because of the wine which was  
an elegant bottle of some imported stuff such a Burgundy or some such  
which Father Callahan likes but which has to play second fiddle so  
far as I am concerned, when weighed against port.

I regret to report that some colored school off some place  
is having a basket ball game tonight in which the St. Mathew's  
team will participate. Net result: no secretaries. I  
think it doesn't matter much, I hope, although there seems to  
be a sizeable letter from the Segelous but I'm hoping that is an  
acknowledgement of the Hunter canvases recently ordered. There are  
three pages, however, of this size and both sides filled, even as  
this, from that Marshall woman. She must have decided to tell me  
the story of her life or have copied the first volume of the Encyclope  
Britannica or some such. I'm hoping it isn't some elaborate plan  
for taking over an apartment in New Orleans or New York or Hollywood,  
or some such, none of which would surprise me. There also  
seems to be a long-ish letter from Helen Hughes which, I hope is  
mostly about Florida flora and fauna and nothing so pressing  
that it will not wait until the morrow. No or three other pieces  
appear to be bread and butter notes from pilgrims, probably, but  
one of those makes two pages. It's odd how so many long ones come  
slap on the day all the secretariat decides to go on a frolic.

The James Livingstons of Hatchitoches came to see me just  
as I was finishing supper. They had been in South Louisiana for  
Christmas and had taken this opportunity to come down to bring  
me a bottle of South American wine which I, of course, opened and  
which we all agreed was wonderful. In my beard I added that  
if one liked a dry Sauterne, it certainly would be wonderful but  
I can imagine nothing duller than a dry Sauterne slap after leaving  
the supper table.

Etty Levy telephoned me at 4:30. She a nice old gal  
but, brother, can she talk. She is just back from Houston where  
she had some sort of a throat operation which pulled her tonal  
quality down from a tit-mouse squeak to the rasp of a Bankhead.  
We did the operation for ever so long and then went into the book  
review section, she having recently read the Marcia Davenport murder  
mystery, etc., etc., etc. until, in desperation, at 5:10, I  
whizzed the dial around, screamed that I couldn't hear her and  
gently placed the receiver in its place. Poor Miss Etty, so  
kind but possessed of so much stamina.

We are promised rain for the week end, --I hope.  
It will be so good for the ground and so bad for road runners that  
I shall be doubly entranced.....

7136

Sunday, January 9th, 1955.

Memorandum:

A marvelous, slow drizzle during the past 24 hours with every  
drop being absorbed and none of it running off. We could stand  
days of such business but are thankful for this generous handout.

Yesterday I learned Reform plantation house was headed for des-  
truction. I have always liked this old Francois Morbiaux house up Bermuda  
way and as there aren't half a dozen ante bellum plantation houses  
along the river, the passing of one always seems a major disaster.  
And so I called Randolph Jones who owns the place and asked him about  
the matter. He said he would let the house and 22 acres be sold  
separately if somebody wanted it. What he wanted was to get rid of  
it. Then I telephoned a couple of people in town who at various times he  
mentioned the probability that they would build homes in town. I  
convinced one of them, at least, that Reform was something to consid-  
er. The rain wasn't a good setting for inspecting the place and so next  
end when the prospective purchaser will be in this region again, we  
shall inspect it and during the interim, I shall be able to get  
a price from the Joneses. In the meantime, I shall be busy "holdin'  
the thought" that this old place may be rescued from destruction.

The Parish had a lamentable murder this week. On Tuesday  
Mr. Clugg, a white gentleman, was missing. He operated a little store  
on the road between Sam Tobin's Typo plantation (Now Vernon Cloutier  
and the Montgomery Ferry. The door of the store was ajar but no Mr.  
Clugg. Everybody liked old Mr. Clugg and his dog but neither were  
to be found although his Ford truck was found on the highway near  
Oak Lawn (Cashmere) plantation, the inside of the cab burned out but  
no damage to the engine.

At Frenchie's store, hard by St. Mathew's school, a negro  
named Sarpy, twice a post graduate student at Angola prison, an  
resident of the Bermuda area, worried Frenchie, trying to get  
him to give him a bottle of wine on credit. That was last Saturday.  
On Wednesday, Sarpy was back again in a fine new suit and buying  
drinks lavishly for all customers.

Teh Sheriff was advised.

On Thursday, --and this seems so odd, --Frenchie's son who lives  
in the Bermuda area, was back again in a fine new suit and buying  
drinks lavishly for all customers.



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Bayou Natchez went hunting along the levee, ten miles up the road on the J. H. Williams plantation. Behind the levee, in the gully a dog was whining and barking. He wouldn't leave the spot when called. Here Mr. Clugg's body was found, two bullets through his head, his throat cut and evidences of a futile attempt to cremate his body.

On Saturday Sarpie confessed that he and two ex-convict associates had done the deed. All the local colored people are be-moaning Mr. Clugg's death for he was kind to them all. They all hope they have seen the last of the culprits. Peter told me he just missed killing Sarpie a while back at the local honkey-tonk when Sarpie got out of and, on dropping his revolver, Peter picked it up and fired it, but Sarpie's ear with the powder but otherwise missing him. Peter said he is sorry he didn't fire a second bullet slap in his face. There hasn't been so much talk about a crime since that "Man Named who was white, carved up the white lady on the railroad tracks near Stoches."

Dr. Rand asked me this week to listen to the ABC broadcast from the Library of Congress at 3 o'clock on Sunday. I, who never get around to radio-ing during the day, took time out to do so. I enjoyed the program and the one immediately following on the same net work in which the life of Dr. George Washington Carver was portrayed under the title of Heritage. Last night, I heard the Clifton Fadiman "Conversations" program in which he and his guests discussed ghost stories. Nobody with whom I have spoken since thought anything of what impressed me the most, --the shortest ghost story on record.

"And so everything on earth had died except one man who was sitting in his home at dusk dark when a sudden knocking at his door startled him."

I found that so silly it made me laugh.

Thanks to the rain, interruptions have been few over the week last night I did a dab of reading from Robert L. Heilbroner's "The Worldly Philosophers", being thumb nail sketches of the lives and theories of 18th, 19th and 20th century economists. I find it informative. I got half way through Karl Marx before drowsiness came up with me. In spite of such promising potentials, what a miserable life said Marx and his family lived, and how astonished Marx himself be to see what a twist contemporary times have been given by the development of his theories.

Tonight I think I shall fold up early for although I feel fine I instinctively feel there'll be lots of things to do this coming gardening, possibly sessions with that Marshall woman, etc not to mention Sister Frances Jerome, and I'm tired in contemplating same.

8817

7138

Monday, January 10th, 1955.

Memorandum:  
Our rain lasted until this morning and although not more than 2 inches fell as between Saturday night and Monday morning every drop of it counted and none was wasted by run offs. We are scheduled for a 34 low tonight but bright skies will make things pleasant on the morrow.

Ora telephoned me today to read me something appearing in Time magazine about a Boucher exhibit in Detroit, but the connection was cut and I never did hear more than a couple of sentences. She has been ailing as have so many in this area that up-set stomach business followed by cramps and a curative medicine that seems to put everyone back to normalcy again within 24 hours. I believe the article referred to Boucher as having a patron in the person of Mme. de Pompadour, "mistress of Louis XV". As she was closer to the King than anyone else over span of twenty years, perhaps "mistress" is the correct word, although it would seem to me that that word usually pre-supposes a man and Heaven knows that was not the peg on which the association was hung. I believe the line in the letter from the Library of Congress concerning La Madeleine, used the words, "la trop fame Marquise" and that seems to be equally incorrect for it would seem to me that the confusion in the public mind concerning the stems from the fact that this most important woman in the cultural pattern of the 18th century was never sufficiently well known or her greatness comprehended but was forever lost in the mix-up of the public with that other totally unimportant lady who undoubtedly was the true "maitresse".

I just noticed that I gave myself a Denholme margin and so I adjusted the gages a bit to correct same. In speaking of little Miss Denholme it would seem as though she is less active in the field of correspondence than formerly when she was in business and a typewriter was readily at hand. In passing, too, I might say that it would appear that Helen Baldwin takes pen in hand less frequently, although for all I know, she be currently lost on some cruise or deep in the herat of Mexico or so such.



8617

7139

Twice my telephone rang last night and each time it was a wrong number but State Senator Friedman recognizing my voice, decided we might as well chat a little regardless. He told me the State of Louisiana had already received 18 million dollars on tide oil leases and that by the first of May, twenty million more would be added to that amount, all of which, as I understand it, is being allotted to a road building program. He said an unnamed banker offered the State a loan of a billion dollars forthwith with payments to be made ~~relatively~~, --repayment of loan, from tide land oil deals. Only the 3 mile limit is being leased at present but if the State wins its suit against the Federal Government and gets 10 miles off shore land, I shudder to think of the binge on which Earle Long's Administration will go in 1948 when most assuredly he will be elected Governor.

The book on Karl Marx which I mentioned yesterday said that Marx had, in 1867, figured out perfectly the inevitability of self-destruction on the part of Capitalism on the theoretical side, what competition invariably reducing profits to the point of bankruptcy. But he failed utterly to comprehend that the Government which he supposed would remain in the hands of the Capitalists, would emerge as an arbiter so that profits would be distributed under Government supervision. The author pointed out, in speaking of how constant change is imperative if any concern in the Capitalistic system is to succeed, by stating that one firm in America, --I imagine Dupont, set forth figures indicating 60 per cent of its income in one year was made from merchandise that ten years before the company hadn't manufactured at all. This is a 1 stuff we know, of course, but it is interesting to have the theory blown away occasionally to give us a glimpse of trends without the fanfare and trumpets of cock-eyed propaganda.

I found "Meet the Press" as dull as a dumplin' last night, what with that California number, -- Senator Moland, being the guest and none of his inquisitors seeming to care much what he did say.

Across the fence, everything seems lovely. Perhaps this is due in part to the mid February frolic. I believe it is on the 12th the special car leaves for Atlantic City where a day or two will be spent talking about R.E. A., after which there will be a couple of days in Manhattan and thence to Montreal, Toronto, Detroit, St. Louis and back home again about the 22nd or 23rd, giving the lady an opportunity to give a birthday party for herself on the 25 of February. I suppose Madam Regard will hibernate in Mansura. Why anyone should want to travel to Atlantic City or Toronto in February I wouldn't know but then, there are so many things I don't anyway....

1117

7140

Tuesday, January 11th, 1954.

Memorandum:

Sunny and cool, exhilarating while physically active and a dab on the chill side if merely fiddling about.

And I indulged in the fiddling section for a couple of hours around noon when I found Will Rogers at the store, anxious to find something to do. The springs had oozed out of the bottom of my sofa during the holidays and although Will had never taken a crack at upholstery, he thought he could manage such an undertaking and so we went to work on it. I think a professional upholsterer would have frowned on the material I provided such as strips of Lowell cloth in lieu of burlap, etc., but when the job was finished it looked alright to me and it "set" comfortably and since comfort seems to be the primary test for such a job, I guess it will pass.

Sister Frances Jerome telephoned me about 10 a.m. to let me know where she was pursuing her efforts in search of original material and to ask at what hour I expected Carolyn. It is quite true that I had expected her sometime during the day but as to hour I had no notion. I pen these lines at 9:30 p.m., and as no representative of Marshall has put in an appearance, I assume we were wrong in our expectations.

At the coffee hour this morning, I learned of a new type of Book Club which I feel sure would interest us both equally. It is quite different from the usual Book of the Month, Doubleday Doran type of organization. Celeste is one of the charter members of this local Book Club and its membership is limited to 10 or 15 members, all of whom are of the same social strata and, so far as I know, motivated by like senses of value and enthusiasms. The Club meets twelve times a year, -- once a month, and at the January meeting, some member brings forth a book which at each monthly meeting is passed to another member who retains it for a month, passing it on to a third member and so throughout the succeeding months, and, as it explained to me, "it doesn't matter if the thing is retained by a single member for a whole month or not, since nobody ever reads it we never talk about books at our meetings". You can readily see this



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7141

it a somewhat novel type of Book Club.

Last week end was an exceedingly busy one for at least two members of the Club with whom I am acquainted. It had been decided that Monday night's meeting, held in the home of a prominent business man whose wife is an officer of the Club, (interruption by a wrong number telephone call)....It was decided that each member would appear in a costume from the Flapper Era. One lady wore an informal birdal costume, another a party dress coming only to the knees, etc.. As described to me, the "costumes were perfectly darling" and the eve was devoted primarily to laughing and screaming at the appearance of the respective members of the Club. "The next meeting of the Book Club is going to be held at So-and-So's house and none of us can wait until the night arrives." How tame all this makes such things as the gatherings at the Hotel de Bambouillet in the 17th century or dinners at Mme. de Coigny or teas at the Princesse de Conti in the 18th century.

And I found it a striking coincidence that the word, party, came over the ether waves in quite another connection before the day was out. News from Berlin reported the release of another American soldier Soviet Russia. The youth heails from Stark, Louisiana, a little town somewhere off the main route from here to Lake Charles and Orange. I thought the immediate re-action of the soldier's mother was so reveal for according to a broadcast from New York, when the soldier's mother Stark was advised by telephone that her son would soon be en route home after spending six years in a Siberian prison camp, she exclaimed:

"The first thing we shall do when he reaches home is to have a big party."

I'll bet she, too, is a charter member of some Stark Book Club.

All this gives me an idea for an extra paragraph in the short story about the second coming of Christ and His appearance in Natchez. Sur the most logical thing in the world for some of those dumb bunnies in the social whirl would be to automatically propose a party.

I fell asleep last night with my radio turned on and when I awoke I recognized "The 12th Street Rage" being rendered in a manner that was both amazing and delightful. It turned out to be a Liberace performance and again I marveled at that getnæman's ability to wrap up an old chromo like "The 12th Street Rag" and have it turn out so astonishingly arresting. I hear him razzed from various quarters, pr as to personality, but I have no opinion on that point as I have never seen him on TV but I must say that if it is he would make his own arrangements, they are just as remarkable as his performances.....

8017

7142

Wednesday, January 12th, 1955.

Memorandum: It's nice to hear from Rudolph but it's difficult to respond to his inquiry regarding a visitation as between the 20th and 24th.

If that woman from Marshall would only let me know when, if ever she plans to make her round, I might be able to ride back as far as Marshall with Rudolph to take a look at Old Bonita and then return here with Carolyn to round up the stuff she has promised to do for Sister Frances Jerome. The latter passed this way today to inquire I had heard anything. I hadn't. The necessity of finishing much research impells said nun to fly around considerably but she hesitates to get too entangled, fearing Carolyn may appear unannounced and the photographic work she has promised to do is so important that she doesn't want to miss her. And thus we all go around in circles, with nobody getting anywhere.

As nothing surprises one as to the whereabouts of said lady, I shouldn't be at all surprised to learn that she spent last week end in Waco and probably has never received my letter suggesting she make down this way on the 11th. One thing is certain, I don't want her and Rudolph here at the same time since the presence of a third person would not be conducive to concentrated labor.

Until hearing from Carolyn, I shall hold a letter from Kay O'Brien which includes a paragraph regarding the O'Brien-Storm calendar, feeling that Carolyn should acquaint herself with the contents. It is stated in Kay's letter that the ladies from the Bluff will head out for New Orleans and Frankly, Louisiana on February 1st, and will make a round to see me. They have to get back to South Carolina for garden tour things in March and they are spending April in California. According to Kay, la Storm will go to Africa to meet la Storm and Carolyn. Carolyn will go to Europe.

My guess is that the above plans have been formulated pretty much. I am sure I am right. I am sure I am right. I am sure I am right.



7143

at The Bluff and I doubt very much if Carolyn has been advised as yet. Broke and with Old Bonita on her hands and a dry summer ahead, everybody I know except Carolyn wouldn't think of such an unexpected hejira. But knowing that Marshall woman as you and do, we wouldn't have much of a concept as to what her re-action would be, except we would both assume that she would go. I should like to put a flea in her ear and I'm hoping she may consult with prior to making a response to any letter from The Bluff which she may have received during the past week or is likely to come any day now. I am thankful for one thing, --apparently I have convinced The Bluff that I'm not chasing anywhere.

I read a couple more chapters last night from The Worldly Philosophers and because errors are so rare in the actual mechanics of recorded books, I was impressed when I stumbled over one which escaped the manufacturers of these recorded words. The chapter dealt with Keynes, the contemporary English economist, remarking that his lineage extended back to the invasion of England by Guillaume le Batard in "Ten o' sissy six". I'm quite sure the text read "1066" but the reader fumbled on that one, and I don't think it struck me as funny but it certainly did sound odd.

Everything is lovely next door. And that is another way of saying there's road running in the offing. It seems that the annual Camellia Show will be held on Saturday at Lafayette, so Celeste and Dee Hertzog will leave here on Friday noon, spend night in New Iberia, I suppose, and Saturday in Lafayette. When I will return, I know not, but I assume on Sunday.

Then, on the 29th, there is doings at the Shamrock Hotel in Houston where there will be much doings, such as Cocktail Parties of the "R.S.V.P." variety are already being heralded, and that will leave but a single week and before the R. E. A. caravan out for Atlantic City. Is it any wonder everything should be so across the fence?

I hear so many people talking about the Marcia Davenport book "My Brother's Keeper" or some such title, being based on the Colli brothers' case of a few years back, I believe. And speaking of Miss Davenport recalls to mind her half sister, Herr Zimbalist daughter who, following a round at Brentano's, married Robert Goe I believe. I still recall with merriment how, when her attention was called to dust on the books in her section of the store and a dust cloth was recommended, she snapped that she would telephone for her maid to come down to attend to same. That girl certainly was a sight. I have at long since assumed it was Alma Gluck's first daughter by Davenport, who got the brains and the second by Zimbalist who got the gusto.....

7144

"Don't worry for me, my friends,  
I'm going to be nothing  
for ever and ever.  
With some and some music  
the things will be nothing  
of or quiet even like I  
with the singing."

Thursday, January 13th, 195

Memorandum: How nice to find your Monday noon air mail in this morning's post. (Apologies to Miss Denholme for the strange margin.)

Your account of your busy days impell me to keep many fingers crossed that this coming week end may provide you with a breathing spell and I'm hoping you will make the most of it by forgetting there are such things as typewriters, telephones and all the rest of the paraphernalia that in any way suggests an office. Knowing as you do that I am happiest when I imagine you may be getting a momentary rest, you will not let the matter of correspondence worry you for the telepathy department is working perfectly and eventually things will smooth out to such a point as we shall be able to exchange news to our mutual satisfaction. In the mean time, let's make the most of the little rest periods, -- they are so rare for you to enjoy and I shall be the more delighted in knowing that you are saving every against a subsequent opportunity to more leisurely exchanges.

I'm looking forward to Plaisir de France with endless impatience for last year's number has given me so much joy throughout the year and so many ideas have germinated by merely turning through it. I suppose there is added interest in the publication as of today, because in the same mail with your letter came one from mein lieber Igor, making further reference to the treatment he envisions for the Melrose article for Plaisir de France and asking me what my status is at Melrose. I should like to know the answer to that one, too. He also mentioned that he is a contributor to Picture Post which, he says, is England's parallel to America's Life magazine, and points out that the material supplied the one differs radically that for the other as Plaisir de France is designed for a much more sophisticated reading public. He says he would like to make us of my personality for the Plaisir and accordingly wants to know if a Swiss friend of his might spend the 29th and 30th here and he asks "how long" it is by car from New Orleans to Melrose. Much farther than he imagines will be my answer, don't you think so.



7145

"Don't mourn for me, my friends,  
Don't weep for me never,  
For I'm going to do nothing  
For ever and ever.  
With sounds and sweet music  
The heavens will be ringing,  
But I shall have nothing to do  
With the singing."

Epitaph of the old char woman.

The above jingle delighted me so much I had to jot it down.  
It is from the Chapter on Keynes in The Worldly Philosophers. Poor,  
tired old char woman, and obviously bereft of any hopes of ever making  
the Pearly Gates.

I finally and at long last got around to read Carolyn's  
letters and I shall send them along herewith or under separate cover  
While in the midst of them, she telephoned from Marshall, saying she  
had just returned from three days in Dallas and so had failed to get  
my letter on Monday, asking her to make a round this week. I  
can never wade through her letters again but it seems to me she was  
me to appear at Old Bonita about the time she was "studying about" her  
out for Dallas. She said she plans to come this way next Tuesday.  
So be it. I shall write Rudolph not to come.

She said she hadn't heard anything from The Bluff of late  
and asked if I had. I told her I had heard that she and Aunt Willie  
were heading out for Africa this summer. She thought that would be  
nice to know about a day or two in advance. I shall save Kay's  
letter for her to read. Come to think of it, I guess the African ja  
was originally designed as an atmospheric thing for the writing of  
Marie herese. I should think both Farley and Carolyn should make a  
trip but that would be on the assumption, of course, that Farley and  
Carolyn were ever going to do the book.

Figure as I may, I cannot comprehend how Carolyn is going to do  
pictures and books about Cane River, maintain Old Bonita through the  
drought of summer and be spinning around Africa all at the same time  
but I worry not at all on that score. To begin with, I don't under-  
stand how Carolyn operates anyway and if she is capable of maintain-  
ing the pace she does without getting bogged down, I have no doubt wider  
scopes of endeavor may be carried off with equal ease and, may  
I say, with equal profit, if any.

I'm so glad you liked the disks, I--musical and dated, as it were  
The cover on the box was so pretty, I could think of but a single person  
to whom, because of equal appeal, to whom it should belong.....

7146

Friday, January 14th, 1955.

Memorandum:

How nice, how nice, how nice.....the lovely gift, so  
generously dedicated with your sweet note, arrived by this d.  
post. It's so pleasant just to turn through its elegant pages  
and so many ideas spring up from any old page that it seems  
matter not if one is in either the advertising or the central  
Art section of the publication.

There were so many interruptions today, I never did get  
an opportunity during daylight hours to turn through it stra-  
through, and as I am sleepy tonight, I am going to reserve r.  
yesterday's pages and exploring additional ones on the  
morrow. What a wonderful issue and how terribly nice of you  
provide me with so much pleasure, not only for the impending  
but for so many happy hours in the months ahead. I am  
leaving your note attached to the cover and shall call it to  
Carolyn's attention next week when she passes this way.

J. H. is in New Orleans but I learned from something Pa  
and the clerk were talking about that it appears J. H. is go-  
ing to Shreveport this coming week, and this would provide me wi-  
th opportunity to accept his invitation for once. I understand  
there is some cotton council meeting prior to the Houston on  
the 29th,--this one a regional thing, I suppose. In any event  
I shall drop Carolyn a note, suggesting she meet me in Shreve-  
port, drive me to Old Bonita for the landscaping survey, and then  
same day, drive me back here. I believe Wednesday will  
probably be the day of the meeting and I shall be glad to ma-  
ke the most of it as it will provide me an opportunity to leave  
here after mail time, do the survey and get that long  
awaited chore done and so get back here on the same date, and  
having once made the survey, I shall thus be able to put thru  
down on any of those famous week ends of which both Carolyn  
and Helen have talked about for so many years.

A vase of blue hyacinthes graced the Madam's marble top  
in her bedroom today. And it was pleasant tonight to hear  
E. R. Murrow deliver his eulogy to Dr. Schweitzer on his 80th  
birthday. I wish La Storm might see the great soul while in  
Africa, for I think both would find pleasure in each other's  
company.



7147

8417

You may well imagine my surprise at the post office this morning when Eugene handed me my mail. I didn't know the Harne were in Hawaii but I was positively startled at J. H.'s card from New Delhi, supposing, as I did, that he is in New Orleans. My secretary couldn't make out the cancellation date but I assume this card must have been mailed during the week of the 20th of November. I shall let this dwaddling on the part of the mails remain in my mind when I ponder as to the possibility that some communication or other that has been hoped for fails to put in a prompt appearance, for surely this is an excellent example of how things can slow down on occasion. As I recall, J. H. got back to Melrose about December 8th or 9th and it does seem the mail might have caught up with him if it couldn't beat him the same destination.

I assume J. H. will be home tonight or tomorrow and I shall note with interest his surprise in learning of yesterday's postal advent.

Celeste and Dee Hertzog pulled out this noon for Lafayette for the Camellia Show, leaving Madam Regard and me quite alone the plantation tonight, and we are liking it. I suppose one reason why I am inclined to be sleepy at the moment is because I have been sitting. And you can imagine my impatience to await what gift of appreciation I shall be receiving on Celeste's return. Dallas trip was meager but that was my fault because I didn't send Madam Regard to the hospital, but the Sugar Festival brought forth a plum and a banana, as I recall, or was there an apple, a gesture of gratitude for my baby sitting on that occasion. I remember some mulatto women gossiping the other day and they were expressing their surprise that the lady's husband fails to provide her with any money. I'm sure they would drop dead if they knew the sums through her fingers weekly, and, as is my old question as to what the Dutch did with the treasures of the fabulous East, what in the world is there to show for it all.

It is warm tonight and the sky is overcast with clouds while the weather man says will bring a few sprinkles but only that, the morrow. I sauntered slowly on my way back to Yucca tonight for the narcissus bulbs are about reaching their pinnacle of perfection, the gardens are incredibly sweet, as you may well imagine.

But now I must fold and probably I shall have to struggle to my eyes open until the news has been reported but dreams will be pleasant, what with Plaisir awaiting me at tomorrow's dawning.

8417

7148

Sunday, January 16th, 1955.

Memorandum:

I note this peculiarity and trust it signifies nothing more than ordinary wool gathering on J. H.'s part, --J. H. who never takes a drop of liquor.

Madam Regard told me this afternoon that J. H. said to her this morning that we ought to hold dinner until a little after 11 since Dan would be a little late. As we usually dine at 11:30, this seemed a little odd and after J. H., Pat and I had gone to break bread and Madam Regard held up serving dinner, she inquired as to when Dan might be expected to arrive and J. H. said he must have mis-spoken as he had intended to say Pat would be late, which he wasn't.

Then J. H. told me that Mrs. Lambre of Bermuda had telephoned him a few minutes before saying she had friends from Ohio who would love to visit Melrose at 3 this afternoon. J. H. suggested I telephone her if that was not convenient for me. It was convenient, however, and I waited for half an hour on the gallery across the fence, thinking the Lambres, - old friends, - would drive to the site and I thought the shelter from the rain would give me a good vantage point to note their advent. I thought Madam Regard might be sleeping and so didn't go inside until I heard the telephone ring. I responded and was vaguely surprised to hear a lady say that she was Mrs. Jordan of Hatchitoches with friends from Iowa who had spoiled with J. H. earlier in the day about a Melrose tour which the ensuing rain had washed out, etc., etc.

Somehow I can't make Lambre, Ohio and Bermuda rhyme with Jordan, Iowa and Hatchitoches but perhaps that was close enough for a gentleman counting cotton bales in his mind's eye.

There was a nice slow drizzle yesterday and today, and in spite of it, on Saturday afternoon, the Woods came down from Hatchitoches and I piloted them through Reform plantation with which they both are in love in spite of the ample oozing of mud and water. Later I contacted Randolph Jones who couldn't tell me how much he wanted for the property but hoped the prospective purchasers would offer him a price. I told him they had asked my opinion of its worth and that I had stalled until he could give me an approximate figure. He promised to make up his mind on Monday and until then, I shall continue holding the thought that Reform Plantation may be saved from destruction.



8417

7149

As for Celeste and her week end, everything seemed to rock all smoothly except an excess of rain for much of the time. But Friday night's pageant was to everyone's enchantment, apparently and the endless collections of camellias at some large auditorium where the prize flowers are on display is amazing as an assembly of such boundless floral treasures.

Although she saw quite a few people from the Shreveport area whom she knew, Celeste didn't happen to encounter any representative from Alexandria or Natchez, oddly enough, although in view of the tremendous number of people who converge on the town for this annual exhibit, I suppose one might easily fail to encounter an endless number of familiar faces. It was interesting to learn that one might see a Chinese magnolia now and then in Lafayette and New Iberia, already in blossom. I reckon the Melrose one's will not start unfolding for another ten days.

I suppose I might have heard more about the situation in Lafayette had I been across the fence when Celeste got home a round first day. I didn't pass that way until after 6 and, thanks to some tiresome TV programs, general interest centered on that instrument and again I realized what a great blessing this invention really is as a time killer and a substitute for conversation. I don't mind admitting that sometimes, out of politeness, I sometimes linger for an hour after supper to give an impression of interest in the programs of dubious quality but while I secretly resent the waste of time, still I am thankful for the relaxation it provides. Chatter and the opportunity it provides me to rest my eyes a little before returning to Lucca to chat a bit with you and to read a little before folding up my beard in anticipation of hearing Meet the Pre

I enjoyed running through the brief account of that strange concoction of espionage deception which is detailed so briefly in that little book, "The Man Who Never Was". Somehow the factual story ran like a Sherlock Holmes tale being played backward on a film. I believe an abridgement of this unique episode of war doings appeared a few years back in Reader's Digest, but I found it entertaining to run through it in its full length, although even so, the account is brief.

There was a letter from Madam Marco in Saturday's post. It is good to know she is able to write even though I shall probably have to wait a day or two more before finding someone capable of deciphering after which I shall send it along. I was sorry that I was unable to hear the Clifton Fadiman broadcast last night, but Dark Duke gave me an excellent account of Army life as he had experienced it in Modena and that, as a performance, I think, out-did anything that could have issued from the ether waves.....

8417

7150

*Dr. Butler's death*

Monday, January 17th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Ora telephoned me this morning at 7. She said that under date line of January 16th, The Shreveport Times reported the death of Dr. Pierce Butler at the home of a daughter at Oak Ridge, Tennessee. I have asked different people to look for the announcement in the Times Picayune and I shall enclose same, should it come to hand. Once in a while, the death of a person seems to mark the passing of an era and such for me seems to be the case in this instance.

So often Southern children, born in the 1860's and 1870's, -- Dr. Butler was 82, received in their early training the effects of the full after-glow of the ante bellum period in which their parents had grown up. Thus they presented certain vivid aspects of the generation just before them and although those receiving this were few in number, they themselves never seemed able to pass it along in its full intensity, as they had received it, to their own offspring. Dr. Butler, Miss Louise, Madam Marco, Miss Cammie, to name a few, were splendid examples of this effect of mirroring the civilization which had died out so short a time before they were born and while I deeply regret the inability of our generation to transmit it again to those next in line behind us, still I shall always feel indebted for the richness that was mine in having been able to witness the phenomenon in such persons as the Butlers, Wailes,

Sister Frances Jerome came by for a moment this afternoon. While she was here, waiting to see J. H., one of my friends of deepest dye, passed this way, too, a youth I hadn't seen since mid December. He had pneumonia in November and after recovering, was stricken again with it about Christmas time. He is a member of the family on whom Fr Miller and I used to doctor and it was his brother who so touchingly put me with the gift of the frog for the little pool at the west end of I. Sister Frances Jerome thought the youth looked pale and it depressed to realize he would be getting little or no care from his nit-wit mama, for consumption so often seems to tread on the heels of these ne pneumonia cases when recuperation isn't attended my care and tenderness. There is pity enough for those who are afflicted with tuberculosis but



7151

something dreadfully disturbing about recognizing someone how has less  
than one chance in a thousand from heading into it. Perhaps I can  
get the local clinic at St. Mathews to do something about it, but  
neglect is such a difficult thing to contend with and where prevention  
is almost impossible, cures are even more difficult to manage. But  
I shall do a Mary Baker Eddy and see what holding the thought and other  
things can accomplish.

Sister Frances Jerome has about come to the conclusion that I read  
years back but have never voiced to her, to wit, that the landed gentry  
in the upper social brackets of the mulatto section are almost impossible  
to deal with in matters relating to racial things and after profound  
thought and study, including conferences with high born mulatto members  
are active in S. A. C. P., she voices my intuitive feelings, too, in  
asking one's self if these people in the higher brackets of the mulatto  
social set aren't less motivated by a desire to advance the condition  
of all people of color and if, in fact, they aren't primarily concerned  
with using the neck of the negro as a stepping stone on which they can  
elevate their own position a little higher. In short, I shouldn't be  
surprised if the landed mulatto gentry are either suspicious of the mot  
of people like Sister Frances Jerome and me or, puzzled by our efforts,  
they simply conclude we are fools.

Randolph Jones telephoned me this noon to give me a price on  
Reform plantation house and its 22 acres. He wants \$15,000.00 for it.  
The acreage, according to present standards, is worth \$4,000.00  
which puts too high a figure on the value of the house which would have  
done all over. I shall give the Woods the figure but I shall be  
particular to tell them that I do not recommend the investment.  
I am going to feel very noble when I advise them against buying the  
place for it is very unlikely that another buyer will appear over the  
horizon, which is just another way of saying, of course, that the fate  
of one of the few remaining ante bellum homes in the Cane River country  
is sealed.

Oddly enough, from all I have written thus far, I must give the fa  
impression that I am viewing life momentarily with a jaundiced eye.  
Actually, my spirits, in spite of death, potential difficulties for my  
negro friend and the destruction of Reform Plantation, I feel rather  
light hearted, even as must a mortician, in spite of the demands of his  
The merchant-planter, in spite of being tied to the store and Post Offi  
seems to be making it alright and a sky of concentrated blue and gold  
inclines me toward digging in the ground and that is always  
soul saving.....

7152

Tuesday, January 18th, 1955.

Memorandum:

And so, at long last, we got a regular November Day in  
But since there didn't seem to be an November days" in Nov  
perhaps this is another of those "better late than never" t

Along about 5 o'clock this morning a sudden gust of win  
of a cloud and a few seconds later, the latter dumped a buck  
of water on us. By noon, three inches of rain had come tumb  
and this afternoon waxed colder, the clouds continuing, but th  
promise is for clearing skies and much colder on the morrow and  
that will suit my program perfectly.

If the day pans out as I envision it, I should be in  
Shreveport by 11 and from there Carolyn will whisk me to Old Bonita  
which should be achieved by noon. It seems to me I ought to be  
able to give that place an adequate survey within a couple of hours  
after which I shall recommend that we head back to Melrose to  
arrive here between 5 and 6. It is so rare for me to venture abroa  
that tomorrow's plans seem almost unreal. Heaven knows how long I  
staved off giving my advise on landscaping Old Bonita and although  
I am delighted to express any opinion and even to lay out a chart,  
am hoping this little excursion will enable me to stave off  
nother for a decade or so.

I wrote the American Foundation for the Blind on Monday,  
pointing out that the fourth volume of Talking Book Topics, usually  
received in December, failed to reach me this year. In today's pos  
the recording arrived. It is read by your friend, A. Scourby, Esqu  
he very graciously opens the reading by wishing us all a Merry  
Christmas which is just fine, of course, but slightly on the be-  
late side

From the list I shall order a few items, including the Francis  
Parkman "Oregon Trail" which I requested be recorded about 10  
years ago. You may recall that Parkman, soon after finishing colle  
in the Boston area, made the westward trek across the Great Plains



7153

1846, well before the California gold rush got under way, and as I recall, his account of that section of the country was excellent. In view of subsequent readings, I should like to have another go at the book to see if, thanks to Lewis and Clarke and others, my horizon has been broadened any.

There is also a book by one Dale Morgan, a biography of Jedediah Smith and his efforts in making western fur trade a success. This would seem to tie in with the Parkman thing somewhat but I am particularly anxious to explore its earlier part since said Smith was one of the same Smith family that held so much land in early times in the Seco Creek neighborhood, 10 or 15 miles below Hatcher, and "Aunt Smith" was a sister-in-law or perhaps a niece-in-law of said J. Jedediah S. and "Aunt Smith", you may recall, was the daughter of Thomas Hender married the Reverend Benjamin Chase of Mantua, -Mantua Plantation being a part of the original vast Smith tract and adjacent to Retirement Plantation where finally most of the Mantua treasures were consumed by fire; having been moved from the Mantua museum to Retirement for safety's sake. How Miss Nellie would enjoy this biography if it, indeed, covers any ground much concerning the early Hatcher kin folks of Jedediah.

I notice that Lew Wallace's "Prince of India" or some such was recorded in something like 42 volumes, --and my guess is that fewer read Wallace than Proust but that speculation doesn't cut any ice as to what has been and what has not been recorded.

A brief, I take it, biography of Helen Gould by her daughter-in-law was also included in the list. I am under the impression this has appeared in Ladies Home Journal a year or so back. Do you remember the pretty pink and blue hyacinthes Helen (Mrs. Finley J. Shepherd, used to place in window boxes every year at Easter time in her papa's old house there on the Northeast corner of, --was it 45th or 46th St. opposite W. and J. Sloane, occupying the Southeast corner of the Ave. It's interesting to me notice what remains most vividly in my mind so many years, and of all Fifth Avenue vignettes, those pink and blue hyacinthes seems to remain more vivid than anything.

I am looking for Eugene at the Post Office in the morning for he has returned from Beaumont today, having probably made his Texas jaunt in downpours, both going on Saturday and returning today.....

7154

Trip to Old Bonita,

Wednesday, January 19th, 1955.

Memorandum: It seemed odd, being in the big road, but everything went off nicely and although I am writing a little later than usual, I don't seem to be particularly tired as a result of the unusual employment of my time.

All operations moved along as smooth as silk, getting to town of Shreveport where Carolyn met me and whisked me off to Marshall where we stopped by her home. Carolyn wanted to present her mother with a birthday gift, and I was delighted to meet the lady, a fine character vaguely on the side of the strong characterized dowager. Lonsdale play, giving the impression she was possessed of tons of good judgement and probably a little uncertain about the unusual scope of some of her daughter's undertakings. She had made a chocolate pie and a cup of coffee, about 12:30, we said goodbye, Madame Ramsey saying she was going to her club, we heading ten miles northeasterly to Old Bonita. I shall make one of my inimitable maps to attach herewith, hoping it may give some vague concept of the layout.

I suppose the house is perhaps twice as far back from the road as Yucca is from the highway. The fields are treeless and 15 or 20 of Carolyn's fine cattle were grazing there. A fence, paralleling main road, bisects this space between the highway and the house.

There are two or three large trees in front of the house, - that is on the side toward the road. There are three units in the domestic establishment, the central building and two small of flankers.

The front of the house actually faces not the approach but rather the lake. There are galleries front and back. On the lake side, one large room runs across the building, the room being about the size of the Melrose Library. It is beautifully furnished, with a big fire place opposite the door giving on the gallery toward lake. There are two sofas at right angles to the fire place, bookshelves, and pleasant brio-a-brac, slightly on the brassy side and the fireplace has a crane on which swings a big old iron kettle and a side oven to the right of the fireplace makes possible the broiling of steaks, etc., in an entirely closed compartment, hot as a biscuit, I suppose, since its one side is right next to the fire.



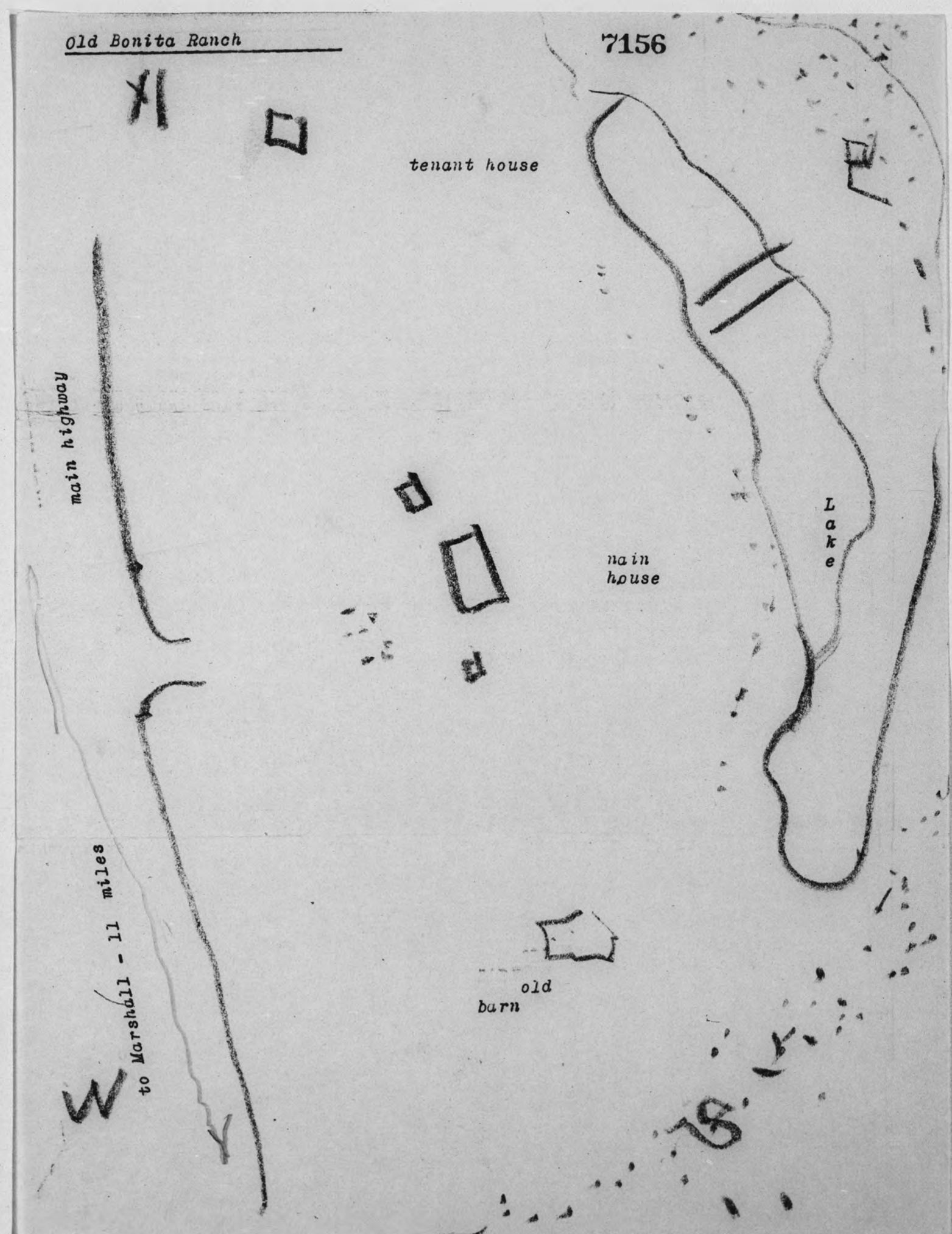
7155

but I have forgotten to mention the bedroom and kitchen. As one approaches the house from the main highway, there are two three doors giving on the gallery. One of these leads to the master bedroom, on the right, a charming room, decorated with old fashioned wall paper, with a pretty old fashioned mantle and several nice pieces of furniture. A bathroom, including a between this bedroom and the kitchen which one enters by the door extreme left of the gallery, and it appears friendly and surprising in its walls, doors and kitchen furniture. I should have added the bath, including the shower is ultra modern in its appointments and conveniences and the same might be said for the kitchen. These three rooms represent the space along the side of the house facing the highway, the long living room covers the length of the house on the side of the lake. I feel instinctively we shall visit this place eventually and therefore I go into these details to provide a jumbled but perhaps vague notion of the place. The little office to the south of the main house is connected with it by a roof covering the ~~the~~ drive between. It has a charming bedroom and many book cases, and quite separate from the main house and entered by another door, is a space which is used as a bedroom and, although I did not notice in particular, probably houses a miniature bath.

The space before the house, toward the lake, is perhaps equal to the size of, say, from 48th to 50th Street and from 5th almost to 7th. The lawn sloped gently down, after the manner of Mount Vernon. The space is all open, save for one or two trees right and left, but pine trees grow along the lake which glisten in the trees. The far bank of the lake is solid woods, mostly pine, makes a lovely dark backdrop for the whole setting. The dam is impressive because it is more of a causeway than anything else, higher than one's head and wide enough for a car to cross. It is not clear to me why it is there since there seems to be as much water on one side as on the other.

The points mentioned above and covered by the map approximate perhaps 50 or 60 acres of the 300 or 500 acres of the farm. I shall refer to that section on the morrow.

What astonishes me most is the amount of labor and the good money that must have gone into the fitting up of the house and the general pushing around of soil to make the home site so attractive. I am glad I made the effort to go to see it. The sky was overcast and we had a distance perfect. We had a nice hot plate around 3 o'clock, chatted with one or two neighbors who dropped in and then headed back toward Melrose. So here I am after my jaunt in the Lone Star State and after putting a couple of scrawls on a sheet of paper by way of a map, I shall fold.....





7157

7157

Thursday, January 20th, 1955.

Memorandum:

The weather remains partly cloud, damp and chill but there are always advantages in such an atmospheric set up since road-running appears to be at a minimum and therefore one can get one with a normal routine.

Carolyn spent the morning and afternoon with Sister Frances Jerome, flying up and down the river and tomorrow they are going to Baton Rouge on some of Sister F. J.'s business and I believe intend going on to New Orleans, in part, at least, in response to a telegram Carolyn received this morning regarding the taking of the apartment in the Crescent City. She asked my advice and I told her frankly that I inclined on the negative side. She said that since she intended doing many stories in Louisiana, she would find it so convenient to operate from such a base and besides, she had to make a special effort to break the spell of Old Bonita where she inclined to do too much work of a physical nature and doesn't con on other aspects of endeavor.

While on the subject of Old Bonita, after I had looked the p over yesterday, I recommended that she sell off the several hundred acres, --everything, in fact, except the 50 or 75 acres, as covered by the inimitable map, leaving only a substantial backdrop of wood to guarantee her privacy on the three sides, --the fourth being covered by the public road. I believe such a sale would pull her out of the red and at the same time relieve her of that frittering away of her energies.

interruption.....

This morning I was glad to see that Thompson lady from Wichita, Kansas, or where ever. La Thompson and her daughter and the latter's new husband had come down to Louisiana a day or two, --isn't it killing how people nowadays travel such distances for a day or two, and they were stopping with the wood family, --Alton Johnson, and so Alton's papa had brought them down from his home a mile or so up the road. The mother-in-law and the son-in-law were apparently just getting over some form of influenza and what with the weather being "air-ish", I made the



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short on walking but tall on "medecine" in the form of a good stiff drink of port all around, and I guess I swallowed mine more in the hopes of killing meandering virus than in unselfish hospitality. I took the opportunity to tell Alton's papa to send his offspring down here this week end sometime, thinking Carolyn might get a couple of shots of him fiddling with his knife and of wood, which might be used to advance eventually in a chapter on Cane River art manifestations.

The interruption noted above was occasioned by the arrival of Carolyn and Sister F. J. whom I had bidden to meet a couple of representatives of the blacker brackets, - the Dark Duke, his brother and Charlie. The first and third of this trio have offspring in St. Mathews school and I thought it would be advantageous for the Sister to get the negro viewpoint, as opposed to the mulatto, regarding home life and particularly educational aspects of the contemporary scene. We had a modest collation, based on simple likes of the Ethiopian taste in food, - sandwiches of beef, of cheese and of pork, with ample stores of dill and pepper pickles, potatoe chips, etc., and fruit cake of Blythe's making with port wine. I employed the collection plate with the long handle to serve the potatoe chips, and as anticipated, only that instrument for such a service could inject a vaguely hilarious touch. I think everyone had a pleasant time and conversation both in person to person chit-chat and in all around discussions seemed pleasant and fruitful.

The nun wanted only a glass of water and indulged only in a couple of potatoe chips, but, being a clever person, no one noted her abstinence, although it was underlined with a light touch when someone remarked, in mock seriousness to the Ethiopians:

"Isn't it remarkable, that lady sticks so solidly to her tall glass of gin."

I suppose never in the Cane River country, perhaps seldom in the world has there been such an unusual list of guests at a private party, and the best part of it is that everyone apparently had such a pleasant time.

It lasted until about 11 when the ladies said goodnight, and the one conducted the other to the convent and then returned to the big house and I sat down to finish this memo, begun before the party got under way. Being sleepy, I realize I have jotted down the day's doing very badly but I'm hoping these random notes may keep the record straight for your delectation regardless. And now I must call it a day but will be back 24 hours hence....

0317

7159

Dr. Butler obs.

Friday, January 21st, 1955.

Memorandum:

The weather "hoovers" around 50 and for the week end we are promised cloudless skies and the same bracing atmosphere.

The Northern migration in the direction of the Gulf is on,-- so many people seem to remain in their Northern homes until after seasonal holiday period and then wing their way South. But while many are stopping in town, according to Carmen, comparatively few are passing this way, for which, needless to say, I am truly grateful. I had but a couple of sets today and that was ample. Outside of those little chores, I had the balance of the day to myself and I liked it.

At breakfast, Zelma told me that Carolyn had headed out early would be back Saturday evening. It was her plan, I believe, to pick up Sister Frances Jerome before 7 so they might drive in comparative so as to arrive in Baton Rouge by 11 o'clock for the appointment with the President of L. S. U. Press. After that, they planned to go on to New Orleans to see about the apartment and to spend the night. I don't pass for knowing anything about the history of nunneries but, off hand, it strikes me that Sister F. J. enjoys more liberty than such gals usually get. Personally, I'm all in favor of such freedom but there must be a heap of the straight-laced sisterhood who would fall out but completely if they knew of such liberty. Come to think of it, the priests appear in costume, fly about to entertainments with such ladies as those li across the fence, disport themselves in sweat shirts and comforters and I can't see any good reason why their counter-parts in the section should enjoy equal latitude. If they would take a tuck in skirts, emulating some such costume as the lady soldiers and seam of our armed forces, I think they would be a heap more comfortable and able to perform their services to humanity with ten times more efficiency.

Be that as it may, I'm glad the gals are having a couple of days in the big road and while this excursion will be casual enough for it probably will represent something somewhat novel of Sister F.



7160

The ladies across the fence, of course, are perfectly enchant about Carolyn's contribution to the nun's good works but I almost laughed out loud over the coffee cups this morning when it was pointed out that it was I who brought the gals together and that without my efforts, etc., etc., etc., and that "Sister Frances Jerome's life would be quite the same because of that". That her memory department will probably never be quite the same, of course, is perfectly true but whether that is something for the ladies across the fence to rejoice about might be a debateable point.

Mr. Reames sent me the enclosed clippings and demonstrates thereby that he has not been instructed about the importance of including dates and source information covering such material. As Dr. Butler died on Sunday afternoon, which was January 16th, 1955, one would assume that the clippings might be from a newspaper, probably the Times Picayune, of January 17th or 18th, 1955. I have waited until this week end to drop Virginia a note, being mindful of what is probably an unusually heavy correspondence during this past week. I shall remark that her father's death probably as no surprise to either of us and that in spite of his physical departure, the solid slabs or foundation stones of his own intellectual integrity have undoubtedly occupied so much space in the stuff of which we are built because of the influences exerted by his own personality on us that we shall never feel that a goodly part of him doesn't remain built into us. If I may borrow the phrase: this I believe and knowing Virginia as I do, the mere saying so, in spite of its seeming triteness, will mean as much to her, perhaps, as the more formal expressions of sympathy which or rather with which the members of the family have undoubtedly been inundated.

A passing pilgrim, following a visit to Mobile last week end, tells me that already the azaleas are coming into bloom in that region of Alabama. I'm not sure, but I'm under the impression this event is about three weeks ahead of schedule, due, no doubt, to the comparatively mild winter.

Reverting to the clippings, these were sent me by Mr. Reames request of Ora. In view of the fact that in certain Hatcher circles it was well known that Dr. Butler honored me to an unusual degree in his friendship, - something so many Hatcher people aspired to but achieved, it seems or would seem odd in any place but Hatcher that such as Roane or Mary Rhodes or Mrs. Moore or Miss Myr should have failed to take pen in hand to advise me about his death. But that Hatcher, and besides, there are all the hoppskirts to be refurbished the March fandango.....

7161

Sunday, January 23rd, 1955.

Memorandum: It's so nice to be able to report a nice quiet week end, for the most part sunny but definitely on the cold side. The latter feature probably discouraged some road runners but not all of them.

I should like to take up the pronunciation of a word with you as a starter. My barber came to work on my Saturday afternoon. He has two boys living in Ohio and I inquired about them. I like to hear colored barbers talk for they are always giving a twist to things that enchant me.

Take for example this word, this word with the accent on the first syllable: --too-lee-doo. When I first heard it, I discovered a mental picture forming in my mind of a big old rooster atop a fence flapping his wings lustily and screaming "Too-lee-doo-lee-doo."

How the thing came up was through my question about where the boys were living, --in Cleveland, I ventured. But he said they were rather were in Too-lee-doo. There are so many Indian names scattered the country of which I have never heard that I wasn't surprised that this one should have escaped me but later, when the barber explained it was a large city and in Northern Ohio, it all suddenly unraveled automatically his Too-lee-doo became my Toledo and I neverly jumped up and flapped my own wings out of sheer delight.

Carolyn and Sister Frances Jerome be-stirred themselves early on Saturday morning in New Orleans and headed this way at 5 a.m., arriving They spent the afternoon working on mulattoes up and down Cane River naturally they both were bound to have been exhausted by night fall. Carolyn was up for early morning Mass today and spent the morning taking pictures in and about the Church. She came this way to break across the fence and left right afterwards for another afternoon of photographing, --interiors of mulatto homes, I believe. It is under standable that she was equally ready for bed when night came back again.

I was frankly delighted to have these two days to myself to work on half a dozen odds and ends, not to mention a few pilgrims from



7162

Henderson, Minnesota, Los Angeles and Dallas.

The Los Angeles people were half a dozen strong and members of the Warner Brothers Studio of California, currently taking shots of some section of the Louisiana country side in the Alexandria neighborhood. I have no doubt they all may be experts in the camera field and for that reason I got quite a kick out of the fact that after asking me if they might take some pictures at Melrose, not one of the three having cameras could get their films into their respective machines. Don't you think that inclines toward the hilarious.

It was good to be back on my old schedule in being able to read on Saturday night. The biography of Jedediah Smith is rather on the dull side, due in fact, perhaps, to the fact that comparatively little is probably known about the man except in the annals of exploration of the upper Missouri and the Santa Fe Trail. Being acquainted with the Lewis and Clarke adventures up the Missouri in 1805, this book which has much to do about the same region in the 1820's, provides a neat stepping stone to The Oregon Trail of the 1846 which I shall undertake next. Familiarity with the names and characteristics of the different Indian tribes appearing in all three books makes the reading of the second and third just that much more interesting because of previous acquaintance and, should I chance to re-read the Lewis and Clark thing sometime later, I shall probably find that the more enter in view of the subsequent knowledge thus acquired regarding the two successive generations following the 1805 expedition.

Morgan, author of the Jedediah Smith biography, writes that the Smith family came from the Susquehanna Valley, moving to Illinois from the Bainbridge - Binghamton, New York region at the turn of the last century. This seems to run counter to my understanding that Jedediah was one of the fabulous Smith boys of the Second Creek neighborhood must ask Mrs. Brandon about this, for that will afford her an opportunity to dwell a little in the Adams County region of the old days and I think she likes to do that with me since, apparently, I am the only one who writes her regularly and surely she has no one in Susie or with whom she can ponder on such matters.

I'm going to be able to read a chapter or two tonight before folding up my beard for the "Meet The Press" program and I congratulate myself on these opportunities which I had not expected.

I'm holding the thought that this week end there may have been peace at Lyme.....

7163

map of Carolyn's New Orleans apt.

Monday  
Tuesday, January 24th, 1955.

Memorandum:

The thermometer stood at 27 this morning. A fine sheet of ice a quarter of an inch thick covered the big old iron sugar pot. A few of the more daring shell pink blossoms atop the Chinese magnolia near the bindery collapsed with the rising of the sun and a few white camellias beyond the Chapel turned from snowy white to a deep coffee color. Fortunately this cold wave came this early and probably did little or no damage to budding things. I am holding the thought that the terminal bud inside the banana stalks escaped destruction, too.

Much blue sky and sunshine gave me an opportunity to devote myself to transplanting and the time was certainly favorable since the sap in everything, vegetable and human, was bound to be at low ebb following the Jack Frost visitation and not a pilgrim all day disturbed my efforts.

As for the two gals, they spent all day and well into the evening in the big road. Carolyn got back only after supper and was delighted at the number of interior scenes she had been able to film of the mulatto hearths.

We chatted for an hour before calling it a day and as we chatted she sketched out a map (see both sides, - as evidenced by the attached sheet). This gives some concept as to the location of the apartment, in relation to its immediate surroundings, plus some notion as to the layout of the place. If she or anyone else needed a New Orleans apartment, this one would seem to be perfectly situated.

In mentioning the huge attic on the 4th floor, just above the 3rd floor apartment she has taken, she mentioned that the windows on this were close to the floor and from the way she described them, I gather they must be placed much after the



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manner of the bed room windows at Monticello which you no doubt recall as being a little unexpected in this position as to lack of height and proximity to the floor.

There are a few pieces of furniture in the apartment and she plans taking a few things from Old Bonita. I opined that with the windows in the attic being considerably under par, the place ought to lend itself nicely as a dark room and suggested that before she does much about rigging up the place, she invite the Segelous over for a look at it, especially in view of the fact that Bob has but last year rigged up a dark room for himself over on Camp Street and probably would not only find himself possessed of some excellent ideas regarding the Pirate's Alley set-up but also might have a few extra nails, a hammer and whatever else it takes to convert a room into a dark room.

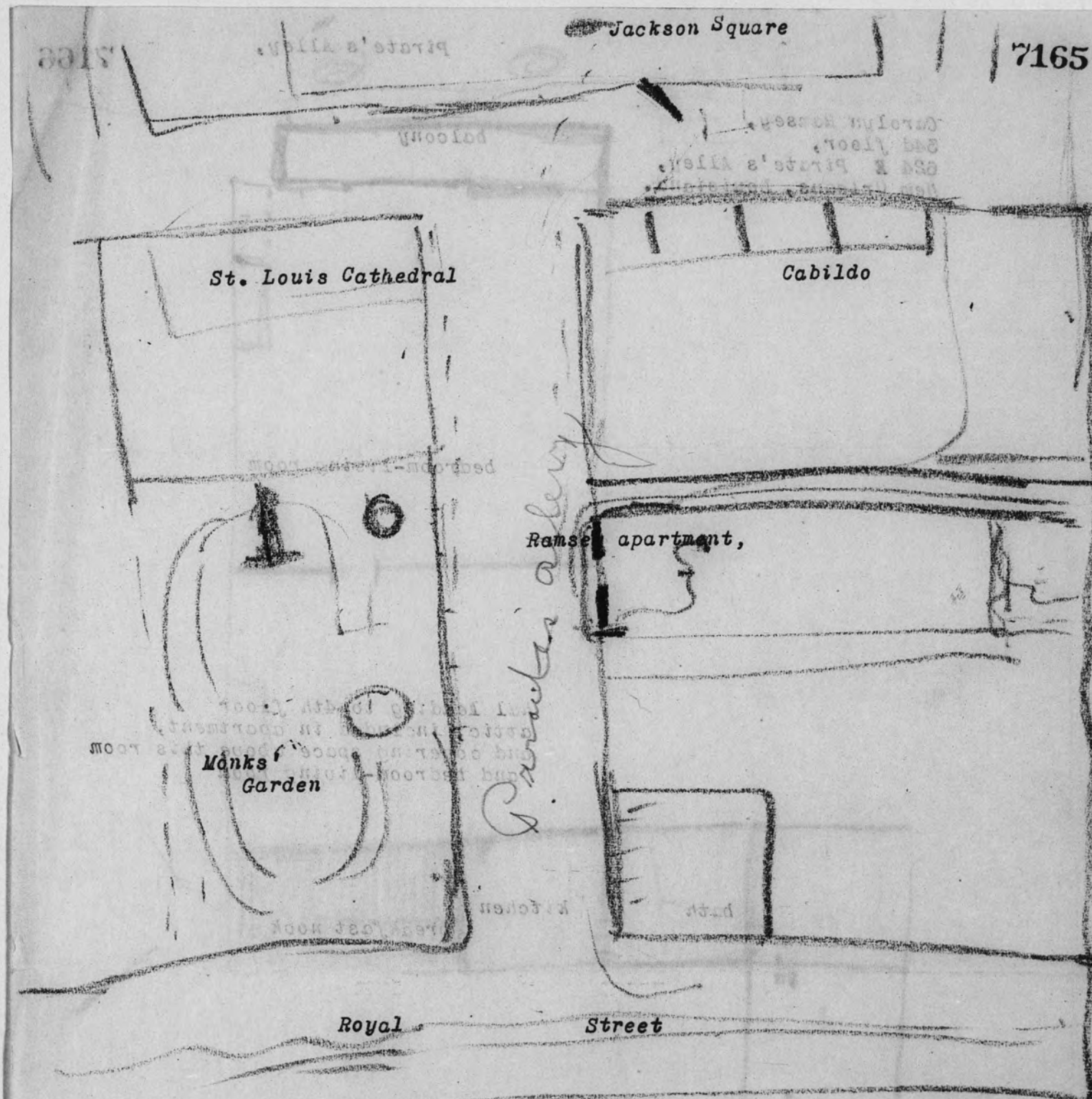
I spoke of the extra pictures of local inhabitants on the domestic side which have been recorded during these past few days and tried to make clear, --seemingly a most difficult task, -- that the Cane River story, so far as the existence of the two races are concerned, is a story which magazine editors ought to recognize as both timely and pertinent to existing situations stemming both from the Supreme Court ruling of last May 17th and what is currently bubbling in South Africa in the realms of racial relations. At long last, and I believe for the first time, I succeeded in conveying to Carolyn the thought that while both the United States and South Africa are scuffling about, puzzled and perplexed as to how something could be worked out so that a measure of harmony might come into being so far as living peaceably together, --the whites and the colored, -- here in the Cane River region we have a pattern, for people which has been operating for a couple of hundred years to everybody's satisfaction and that this pattern, if properly presented to the public, might well serve as an inspiration for a way of life which has long proven satisfactory to both races.

I can't think why this idea is so difficult to get into people's heads, but as we both know, few if any have ever seemed to have grasped it. Perhaps when armed with these pictorial records plus the historic data I have accumulated, the idea may be pounded into an editor's head and the project launched.

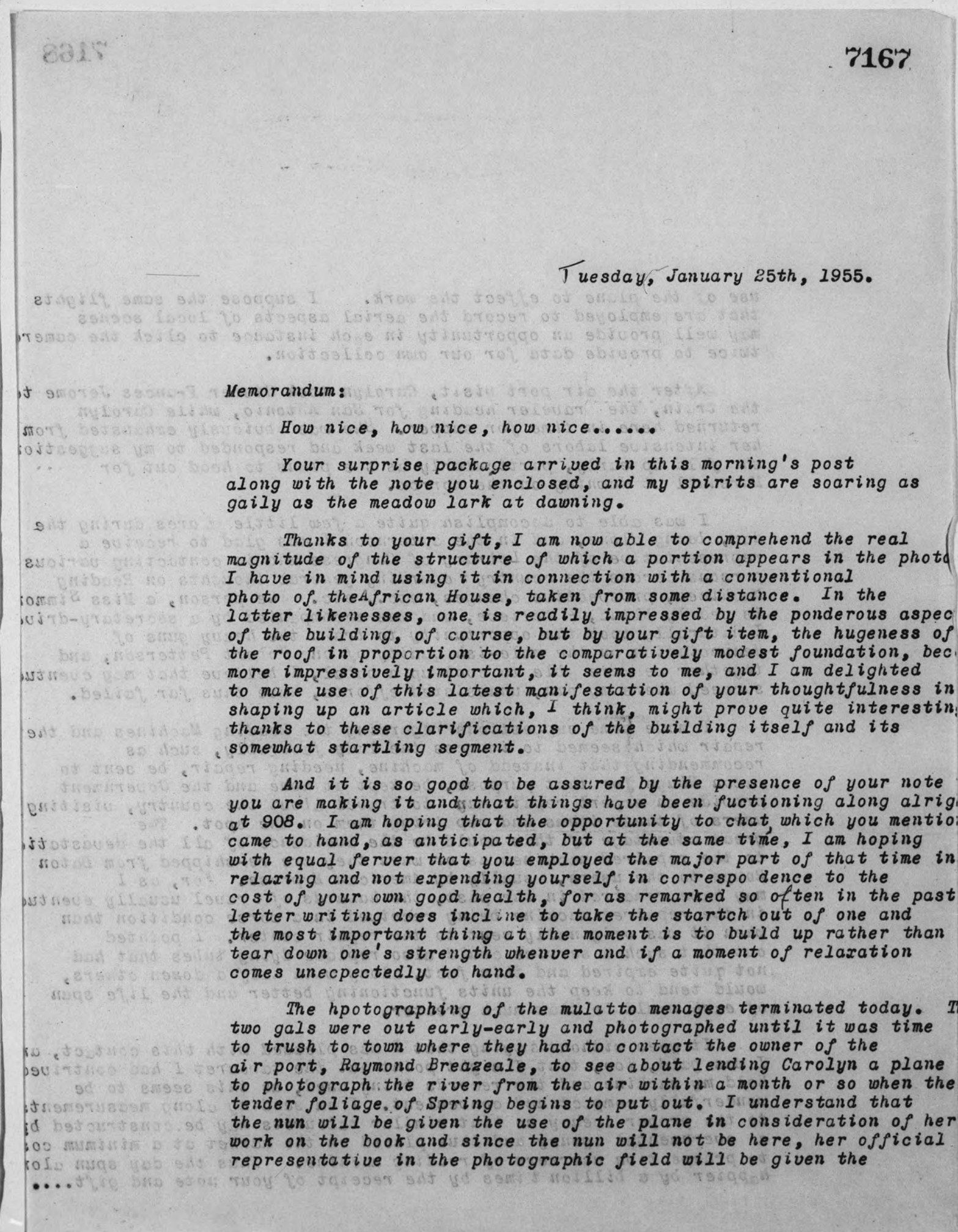
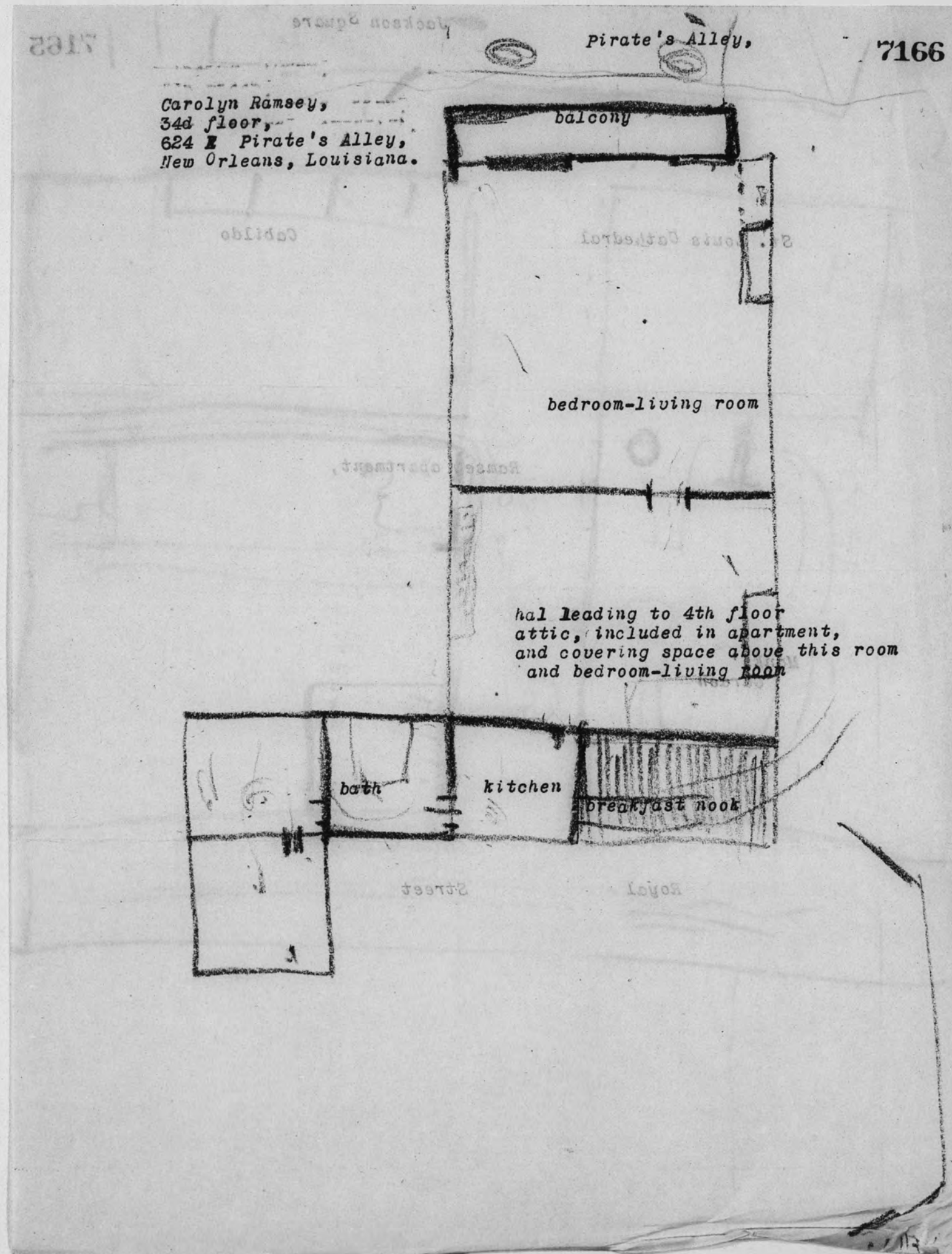
I fear this has been a dull memo but perhaps I have been luck on the morrow.....

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7168

use of the plane to effect the work. I suppose the same flights that are employed to record the aerial aspects of local scenes may well provide an opportunity in each instance to click the camera twice to provide data for our own collection.

After the air port visit, Carolyn took Sister Frances Jerome to the train, the traveler heading for San Antonio, while Carolyn returned here in time for supper. She was obviously exhausted from her intensive labors of the last week and responded to my suggestion she fold up early, particularly as she plans to head out for Marshall at dawn on the morrow.

I was able to accomplish quite a few little chores during the day, being alone, and in the afternoon I was glad to receive a representative of the Library of Congress who is contacting various persons across the country regarding general thoughts on Reading Machines, prospective changes, etc., etc. The person, a Miss Simmon, is nearly blind, I believe, and was accompanied by a secretary-driven car. I naturally took the opportunity to train the heavy guns of denunciation on the mule-ish quality of one Robert Petterson, and together we were able to cook up a cabal, I believe that may eventually succeed where my own, unassisted efforts, have thus far failed.

I made some suggestions regarding the Reading Machines and the repair which seemed to impress the lady favorably, such as recommending that instead of machine, needing repair, be sent to Baton Rouge for that purpose, be kept at home and the Government provide an expert repair man to travel about the country, visiting users of these items and repairing them on the spot. The great advantage of this would be the avoidance of all the devastation to the repaired machines as or when they are re-shipped from Baton Rouge to the users, usually by American Express. For, as I may have remarked in the past, the hazards of travel usually eventually in the repaired machine being received in a worse condition than when it was originally sent to the repair center. I pointed out that such a service could also replace dying tubes that had not quite expired and this fact, along with half a dozen others, would tend to keep the units functioning better and the life span of each would be that much greater.

It goes without saying that I was pleased with this contact, and I was glad, too, that I might point out the tabouret I had contrived to hold my machine and the records being used, as this seems to be wonderfully compact and convenient. I am sending along measurements to the proper agency so that similar tabourets may be constructed by a governmental agency and thus placed on the market at a minimum cost to prospective users of reading machine. Thus the day spun along happier by a billion times by the receipt of your note and gift....

7169

Wednesday, January 26th, 1955.

Memorandum:

What with the thermometer in the mild 60's, it has been a pleasant day, digging in the ground.

The morning post brought some Chinese magnolias and with the weather being so ideal for planting, I had them "a" before 9 o'clock.

Carolyn had taken off a little after breakfast, seeming a little tired, I thought, which would be quite natural, for her intensive labors. But I reckon she was back at Marshall or Old Bonita by noon and, if she is smart, spent the balance of the day collapsing.

As for myself, I shall probably require no rocking to myself to sleep tonight, although I have a few pieces of mail to answer and one or two letters to unknowns, such as the Miss referred to in the Chalkley letter. If not too sleepy, I may even read a dab as I did last night, from the Jedediah volume which, incidentally, isn't so much about J. Smith, E. it is about trapping in the Rocky Mountains in the early days. While I think of it, I want to mention one point made by the author of this book, a slant which had never occurred to me before but which, I think, is worth keeping in mind when reading about early explorers, hunters and trappers in the great Northwest. Morgan points out that certain Indians looked at the early American adventurers in the upper Missouri country as tramps, men without homes coming from Heaven knew and often the treatment of the white man as a troublesome, coudrel seems the more natural when one considers I suppose that since the Western Indians a scant concept of that brack society known as a nation, millions of people functioning as a single people, their inclination to kill and make life miserable for these bands of white men was right in line with the practice exercised on Indians of the Northwest who did not have chance to their particular tribe. I had never thought about this before but it can readily be seen that it must have been impossible



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for an Indian savage who had never seen any other social unit than the little bands of nomadic tribes that never had operating in desperation against fate from birth 'til death, a mind must have found it next to impossible to conceive of a thing as the Americans pushing up the rivers as anything other than "strays" and at best, separated nomads from some forsaken flock of their own, dwelling in some remote situation equal beyond their imagination. Then, too, I suppose, a man had to be pretty much of a rough neck if he planned making his way the world under such conditions as the raw, new country presented. It's a wonder, come to think of it, that the exploring party, Lewis and Clark ever made their round trip but in a way, perhaps their accomplishment wasn't nearly so hazardous as we be that of the little groups of men coming decades after the had to wring a livelihood out of the virgin country and do a of exploring to boot. No wonder blood flowed when white hillbillies started moving in on the red mountain billies, if I may coin a concept.

And speaking of such strange manifestations of that thing called Humanity, it seems not too illogical to mention that the continued deterioration of J. H. Williams' mind, following sessions both at Mayo's and John Hopkins, that a few days before he was placed in St. Paul's or some such place, the institution being one for the mentally ill. I understand his wife and R. B. are looking after the Williams business interests which must be quite a load if one takes into the several plantations to be operated, not to mention all those thousands of geese. Alvin Deblieux telephoned me from town today to inquire about some address or other and in the course of her conversation, remarked that she and her husband had been to Briarwood last week where they found little Miss Dormon looking plump and healthful and apparently well in tune with the world. It is nice to know that things are rocking along so nicely in the quarter. A while back, Caroline, as a Hatchitoches tax payer jumped on a Welfare field worker, - Mrs. Combs, - demanding one of the negro families on Briarwood, have their allotment check increased. It was explained that the clause determining the amount issued could be satisfied if a simple statement were set forth to the field worker who could arrange the increase schedule to everyone's satisfaction, including the Law's, but as threatened by little Miss D. no hubbub should be made through the office as a review of the whole case might lead unsympathetic souls to make a denial of the request but also further cut the existing stipend. Naturally Mrs. Combs was slightly taken a week or so later when a letter of denunciation of the whole Welfare office came through the mails to the Director. Poor simple minded mistress of Briarwood but if she's getting fat a good sign and let us hope the colored folks thereabouts are

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Thursday, January 27th, 1955.

Memorandum:

On awakening this morning, I was delighted to discover that it had rained about a quarter of an inch during the night which was just perfect for the Chinese magnolias planted yesterday morning. As I had watered them after planting, they really didn't need any extra moisture but I always feel that a dab of dampness out of the heavens confirms more of a feeling of stability than a bucket can.

I rushed the above sentence a little when the telephone rang. It was Mr. Reames to tell me that he and his wife and child were heading out for a weekend in New Orleans as a sort of between semester frolic and asking if he could do any chores for me while in the Crescent City.

He also said that Ora had asked him to telephone me to say that on the spur of the moment, what with the week end or mid term lull in educational matters, she had suddenly taken the advice of the lady doctor and decided to fly up to Mayo's for some sort of treatment they accorded her last summer sometime when she was having a nerve thing that induced an unpleasant rash on her person. He said she expected to be back in the middle of the week.

I suppose she headed slap into the cold snap which is currently obtaining up that way. Last night I heard Des Moines report that it was 16 below in Mason City, Iowa, and as Mayo's is in Rochester, Minnesota, which is bound to be further into the glacial section, Ora ought to receive a temperature treatment if nothing else.

What with R.B.'s mother in a very precarious position and R. B. himself having to wrestle with J.H.'s plantation problems, I have no doubt the flight to Mayo's wasn't the most convenient thing in the cards at the moment but modern means of getting about incline one to undertake such jaunts without batting an eye lash to climes which a few years back would have been unthinkable. I suppose their child, Anne, is having a mid term vacation at home from L. S. U. so perhaps she can lend a hand to her papa while her mama is away.



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Thursday, January 27th, 1955

I find myself wondering if my reaction to current news broadcasts is pretty much average in that I find myself inclined to be a little bored by the great amount of talk concerning Formosa. Either the Formosa stuff is dull and tiresome material to start with or else all the commentators I have heard have lacked the art of cooking it up into a palatable state. When the thing started a few days back, it did seem to offer something by way of novelty, what with the Costa Rica rumpus having claimed the headlines for a week or two as the big piece of resistance on the radio's bill of fare. But now that Formosa bobbed up, everybody seems to have skipped Costa Rica completely and I don't recall having heard anything about that squabble now, Lo! these many days. I suppose my interest in international matters is about up to average. If so, there must be many an enthusiast of such programs as, say, Mr. Murrow's, who finds himself Mr. Murrow would balance up his news presentation with other items that are a little less ponderous and much less involved. Tonight he did mention in a sentence the murder of one Rubenstein in his 5th Avenue home. I could have taken another sentence or two on that matter at the of the Formosa business. What I found myself wondering was about the genealogy of this Rubenstein gentleman and if he was by any chance related to the musical family by the same name coming from the same Russia and possessed, according to Peter Illyovitch, of considerable propensity for acquiring money.

Herewith or under separate cover, I shall send along some letters none of which, I think, are of particular interest, but it will serve to keep you abreast of things. To the Library of Congress, I am sending along a couple of letters from the National Broadcasting Company, both of them stating they will be glad to cooperate with Washington in making the Radiman "Conversations" program available for Talking Books. It will be a great pleasure for me to worry Mr. Patterson on this score while he is around up my heavy artillery for another assault on his regarding I, as the Proust matter from quite another position. I may have mentioned in a guide to the fact that I had some preliminary plans for the application of the new pre-entirely new when I was visited along about Tuesday by some sympathetic soul in so sense of new way connected with the Bassinger machines. In the end, my struggle with said test machine Patterson is simply going to boil down to a big endurance test in which I shall either get tired of yipping at his heels, or he will get exhausted by my yipping.

Well, so much for this sitting except to say again how delighted I am to have your message in yesterday's post as conveyed by the picture

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Friday, January 28th, 1955.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your letter of the 22nd, together with all enclosures, in today's post.

How noble of you to devote so much time, energy and thought in my behalf, and doubly so when cold germs are flying about so madly and when, in reality, complete rest would have been so well employed at the effect of your letter on my heart, - a stalwart organ, is exhilarated. I shall busy myself over this week end, holding the thought that you and your neighbor may both be over the hump in the matter of recuperation.

A letter from the Internal Revenue Bureau, --the State, I think, claimed first place in today's examination of the mail because one of the Reverend Fathers passed this way and I made the most of his visit to assist me in that formidable looking envelope, intent as I was in holding the Lyme letter until my Ethiopian secretary should pass this way, for I like to have our exchange of thoughts carried on exclusively through that medium. I was interrupted after finishing the second page of the Lyme letter and as my Ethiopian had to skip to some doings at school tonight, I shall have the pleasure of exploring the balance of the letter and the enclosures on the morrow.

It was so thoughtful of you to pass along such interesting particulars about our favorite characters of the 18th century. And odd it was by way of coincidence that the Damiens episode revolving around the 16th Louis (XV) should have transpired on January 5th also. It sounds like a poor date for attempted assassinations as Damiens and others did.

Often when I contemplate people with tons of money and nothing to do, I think how certain other people, equipped with two such commodities could spend a season from chesnut blossom time, through the summer and into lovely shortening autumnal days, devoting themselves to a study of Madame de Pompadour, reading the endless allied literature concerning her century, visiting her chateaux, gardens and public buildings and drawing such a wealth of interest and pleasure from such visits to the sites of such lovely places and enjoying long evenin in rounding out one's better understanding of the age. That would be ideal, of course, but even the ability to enjoy these things from



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afar and share these things together is so marvelous.

It was so good of you to have made the effort to discover something concerning the origin of the glasses which mean so much to me. I shall see what a letter from this quarter may bring forth although the buyer may be tied down by "trade secrets" and will put up the same blank wall that a personal interview elicited.

And may I thank you for the address for Madame Parlange which I shall get off to her this week end and which will afford her much satisfaction, I am sure. It was so kind of you to offer to look into the matter on her behalf but I shall go on the assumption that she can effect whatever she pleases on her own hook and thereby save you a little moment of which, alas, there are so few in your current routine. And thanks so much for telling me of the books you included in the Library of Congress business. It is good to know there are so many excellent potentials and I shall keep these in mind to stre particularly when and if they appear.

To say that I was flabber gasted at the news of the paucity of Ch spirit from this bend of the river is putting it mildly, after I had he so much about what big numbers were contemplated, immediately after the return of the lady from the metropolitan area in September or when ever. Somehow it reminded me of the line: "It's alright for you to give Mothe one of your creations but nobody else", --and that was said seriously. I gather the lady has the virtue of practicing what she preaches. Hummm

J. H. and Celeste want to Baton Rouge today for a luncheon given by Library Department of which J. H. is a member. Essae Mae must have be right in her element. I am going to baby sit a while tonight and hope to see J. H. when they return to ask him about the Internal Revenue thing. The letter calls for a payment of a percentage on merchandies in 3 cartons, shipped me by Edwards China in November, as originating outside the state of Louisiana. I didn't know there was such a law, and why I never got a similar one before, after all these years of china me ling, I cannot imagine. If there be such a law, I suppose the store mus lots such and if so, I shall, in the future, have shipments made to the store and not to me. I shall touch on this matter again when I underst of recit better. If the state imposes an importa tar along lines of the Federal Government, it would certainly make imports from abroad subject to double taxes which ought to be killing, I should think.

But how insignificant seem such details in contrast to the pleasure of the one letter of importance in today's post. Again my thanks for making my day so happy and the promise of another j like it on the morrow.....

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Sunday, January 30th, 1955.

Memorandum:

How nice on yesterday to be able to continue with pages 3 and 4 of letter, begun on the 22nd and concluded on the 25th. And again my thank for letting me know about the progress of your cold and what I hope turn out to be your recuperation, -- a happy circumstance which I take in part having been accomplished in view of the mailing of your letter.

I'm glad to know that our old confrere is still active and gay and it interesting that he should have brought news of Wadine and her offspr If I had learned of her marriage, I seem to have forgotten it. Wouldn't be interesting to learn of what happened to her former boyfriend.

As for the long distance telephone to the girl friend, I declare that problem appears to be one that is never going to be eradicated, al it is good to know a firm answer was forth-coming. I'm so glad that episode didn't transpire at the time the stork was "hoovering" about, al thought there is never an appropriate time for dealing with such a probl with each re-curring episode, one tends to feel more and more that relatives too often are things of accident and bear no relation by natur the one to the other.

And may I say, too, how much I appreciated your news concerning var literary matters. It is preposterous, of course, that the Proust novel not be recorded on Charlus grounds. That smacks of book burning in the place and for the life of me I can't see why the blind should be denied in print form are on every library shelf. My impulse to thunder away at the matter is more intense than ever and I am determined to keep on the for big game at which I can level the big guns. Everyone with a fair mi that only mature people are going to read Proust whether in ink print or recordings. And besides, when Chaucer's Canterbury Tales were re- corded, all the four letter words were employed, and if Chaucer can be presented on disks, then why can't something much more erudite and valuable. Carumba is all I can say at the moment but there will be much more. Naturally I am delighted to learn of the biography covering Dumas, I suppose. Did I ever refer to visiting his country estate of Monte Cris Its house is in the grandiose Francois Premier style and the hughe iron fence and imposing iron gates carry out the heavy impressiveness. a great big letter, D, is worked into the iron design above the gates. As



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for the property itself, it is situated about half way between St. Germain-en-Laye and Marly-le-Roi, --one of those odd places one encounters now at any place in the world where actually it is in the midst of things but seems a little remote from ordinary traffic.

When going to spend the day at Marly, - Porte Marly, Marly-le Roi or Marly-la-Machine or le Foret de Marly or Louveciennes, I found it convenient to take the electric train which took one to St. Germain-en-Laye in but 15 minutes, the station being on the level of the terrace, and much higher than the surrounding country. Walking away from the terrace and through the town, the road ran down the high and through a marvelous Louis XIV. corners which had obviously been fashioned in the 1600's, for the buildings occupying all four corners were in Quatorzian style and in a way suggested the Palace Vendome on a much reduced scale. It was both charming and sad for the last time I was there, some dolt had ruined one of the four entablatures by installing much neon sign advertisement and ripped out some of the majestic masonry for a gas pump. I suppose by now the place may have been completely metamorphosed into something horribly contemporary and meaningless save for utilitarian purposes.

A mile or two before this splendid monument of a vanished age, -- Perhaps this carfour had once been the royal stables serving the chateau, and following along the charming but unfrequented road, one came to Monte Cristo on the right. From there, just beyond the park, I would start off across the fields at a 45 degree right angle, passing through little farms, once a part of Monte Cristo property, I suppose, and farm which always delighted me. I shall forever regret that I failed to negotiate with one farmer in that neighborhood who was often burning trash when I passed that way. The object of my especial interest was a heavy piece of iron, perhaps 4 feet by 6 feet, which he used as one side of his trash burner. I suppose it didn't really mean anything to him except as a convenience to ward off the heat from the side on which he was pitching the trash but to me it was almost an object of veneration, for in raised filigree and covering one side of this sheet of iron were Louis XIV's coat of arms, --France and Navarre. I had no doubt that it came from Marly-le-Roi, as the Marly domaine was so near to hand and such a huge piece of metal, bearing such a distinguishing mark, could only arrive at that spot from the chateau at the time of its destruction.

I suppose the last time I crossed the same fields was in 1936 and I inquired after the farmer but his wife said he had gone to St. Germain so I missed him and the great iron sheet which is perhaps, just as well, for heaven alone knows what I would have done with it, had I acquired it. Should I ever find myself in that neighborhood again, however, I must cross the same field and shall have fun casting about for the item I ever find it or not.

3. 7177

This is an unexpected pleasure to find myself on page 3, what with my usual self control imposing a two page limit on writing out the poor reader.

But I plead as an excuse the fact that your Saturday-Tuesday letter contained so many interesting particulars that I wanted to refer to that I had exhausted all space before I realized in making my response to half the matters you touched upon.

I did want to say how much indebted I feel to you for having translated and transcribed the data concerning La Madeleine and its most celebrated parishoner. How magnificent it would be if someone like Louis Bertrand or Charles Maugras would do a study in several volumes under some such title as "The World of Mme. de Pompadour", having it as documented, say, as the Freeman study of Washington or the D. Malone opus on Jefferson, with endless digressions concerning the hundred and one personalities and places revolving about that lady's life and times.

I am wondering if that Dr. Smyth of Tulane or Loyola really was interested in the lady about whom he wrote and if he has the cultural capacity to comprehend half of the things for which she labored. In my last letter to him, --some months back, I pointed out that at long last the question as to whether Mme. de Pompadour had anything to do with La Madeleine had been settled and if he should be interested in the matter, I should be delighted to share the particulars with him. Obviously whether she did or meant nothing to him since he never bothered to respond. Such bio. to my way of thinking are about in the class with decorators who know and care nothing about the history of a house they are working since the book or the re-furbishing job are all the same, merely means by which the author or the decorator can display his own wares and round up some money, not so much disdainful as indifferent to the personality or the place to hand.

As for doings on the home front, Jack Frost put ice on the sugar pot on Friday night with the thermometer standing at 25. But as the more tender things were tucked in, the freeze did no noticeable damage. Last night, following a day of full sunshine, it cooled only to 34 and, believe it or not, and this does somewhat surprise me, it was so warm this afternoon that I had to inaugurate the 1955 season of Tender Leaf tea, making use of my beloved "bourdon" and for the millionth time again blessing Lydia and all that that implies.

J. H. left for Houston in mid afternoon on Saturday and is



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to return on Wednesday.

On Saturday noon, a brother-in-law of Peter and Log, died at the dinner table in his Little River cabin. He leaves a wife, and three children. Perhaps Moonie will move from Little to Cane River where she can be near her two brothers, which it would make it nice for her and them, too.

Dr. Rand came to see me this afternoon. We had a short drink together and chatted for perhaps 20 minutes or so before he had to leave. I told him, as we left the house, that he should tell Blythe the Chinese magnolias ought to be blooming next week and as she likes the white ones so much, she might like to make it a point to get up this way. He said I could pass the word along as she was waiting for him in the car at the front gate. I found it odd that she hadn't come in but perhaps she is having one of her off days.

But just as I write these lines, it occurs to me that she did say she heard Carolyn Ramsey had been here and she supposed we had been working hard on a picture book. I observed that Carolyn and the nun had been using a pick and shovel on the business but that I had been taking things more concentratedly in the gardening section. In recalling her reference to Carolyn, it just occurs to me she must have heard from Zelma that Carolyn had been here and probably got distressed because I had interested myself in Carolyn's pictures instead of in Mary Pringles. Probably that is why she preferred staying in the car to coming in. Well, she has got off the track on other matters in times gone by and she can get back on this one if she pleases or not.

I think she has always been a little resentful. I know she has, that I haven't ever enthused over her portraits. Mary's, haven't received any enthusiasm on my part, for I think Blythe claims her as her find and knows so little about photography that she can't realize that Mary, although kid of heart, has no sense and not gift for operating a camera. It was Blythe who was puzzled and a little hurt, I think, because I wouldn't accept photographic post cards Mary made of Melrose and sell same twenty five cents to passing pilgrims. It seems such a pity that neither Blythe nor Mary could comprehend that Mary's pictures weren't worth a cent, let alone 24 more added to same.

I beg your forgiveness for the length of this epistle which shall not be duplicated again very soon, I promise you. And I am holding the thought I haven't worn you out completely.....

0817

7179

Monday, January 31st, 1955.

Memorandum:

The mild weather continues, a dab on the cloudy side but withal warm.

Although I doubled the extent of the usual memo yesterday, I failed to inquire about or rather to respond to your inquiry in your last letter regarding Carolyn's mention of David Nixons. I shall accordingly touch on the subject here although I am uncertain as to how much of the particulars may be already known to you.

Julie Prudhomme Nixon is a cousin of Irma Somperyac Willard. Like Irma, Julie owned a plantation somewhere near Grand Ecure at one time but I think she sold it some time back. In the 1930's while living in New Orleans, she married David Nixon, a talented youth of no fortune. They lived in Europe for a few years, Julie having bought a palace on the Grand Canal in Venice. I believe this was eventually sold and at one time, --and I know not when, I think they owned a house in Paris. In 1938, when Christian and I were in New Orleans, the David Nixons had bought two or more adjoining houses on Madison Street, across the street, from Lyle's house.

Between 1938 and 1945, the Nixons did all sorts of unusual things in their somewhat spacious dwelling. For one thing, they had a small private theatre, wherein David gave quite special entertainments with a pet turtle and a stack of cats. Both grown-ups and children were entranced by these performing animals. Lyle used to laugh in re-counting how difficult it was to make clear to the audience that no matter how delighted they might be with the doings of the cats, no one must ever applaud. But of course it frequently happened that the children in particular, would clap their hands with glee, --whereupon all the cats frightened by the racket, would fly off in every direction and could never be persuaded within the time limits of the same session, to return to their tricks.

Immediately after the war, the Nixons were in Europe again and David was giving violin concerts in Rome, Florence, Paris, etc. He apparently enjoyed quite a vogue but I believe he is back on this side of



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Atlantic, --in Florida, I believe, and Julie is returning shortly and when Irma was here two or three weeks back, she said she wanted to bring them to see me when they came in February to visit her in Hatchitoches where she maintains a little house on the river bank.

At that time she said they were casting about for some place to locate and I suggested that since Hatchitoches, - town and parish, has no antique shop, the Hixons ought to rig up some place like the old Francois Robiaux place, incorporating a little theatres in a psuedo carriage house, an Art gallery in a bazaar balancing house and a guest house constructed inexpensively to house themselves, finish off the square which would have the big house as his fourth side where paying guests could linger at some sort of incredible cost. Irma was entranced at the prospect and it was the above I must have mentioned to Carolyn. It has long seemed so odd to me that nobody has ever opened an antique shop in this parish for people from all about Louisiana chase to New Orleans or Opelousas for such things whereas rich Texans are forever exploring this region in search of antiques. I doubt if the Hixons could ever stand the country as a permanent residence but it might amuse them for a little while and they might as well engage in such past times as in any other way and it might be fun to have them as neighbors, especially if they lived 7 or 8 miles up the road.

I can't tell you how delighted I am to learn from your ever faithful pen that A. Maurbis, gent., has turned out an A. Dumas, pere, biography. I should certainly hope it may be recorded. You mentioned his extraordinary perruque and I think I know the portrait that may have been used, with the mulatto gentleman looking unusually fat and his hair a perfect frizzle I am so sorry Lyle took back to New Orleans with him, - and hence was lost, the perfectly extraordinary photo of said A. Dumas, pere, seated, with Etta Menko, the New Orleans actress on his knee. That photograph was really a sight. I have no idea when it was "struck" but if memory serves me correctly, --and this is only a guess, A. Dumas, pere, died about 1872, so, if that is approximately right, the picture must have been made prior to that date, although while Miss Menko was attired in definitely Godey costume, there was something about the sleeves and frills suggesting the Floradora girls of the Gay '90's, making everything about the picture except her pose and the gentleman's perruque, seem oddly sedate and, if you don't mind, outrageously hilarious.

In view of the several references to A. Dumas, fils, in Maurois' "Lelia", --A. Dumas, fils, journeyed down from Paris to Nohant to attend funeral of George Sand, I am hoping much is included about "fils" in this account of "pere". Do hope your recent indisposition is all on the mend and that you are making every effort to relax when and if you can.....

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Tuesday, February 1st, 1955.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Friday letter in today's post..

The prospects for a quiet week end sounded as though such aspirations had gone into a whirligig and what with the cold snap your section was experiencing at the time, I'm hoping the flight into the country had no effect on your cold. And that reminds me that I heard some sort of a symposium the other day in which a physician remarked that while in modern days we have tended to attribute colds to some virus still unknown, Science is again turning to Hippocrates who declared that colds were caused by low atmospheric temperatures, for now the present trend is to assume that Greek's first physician may have been pretty close to right since it would seem, at least, that if there be a virus in the business, the thing seems to get a really good hold on one only with a sudden drop in the temperature to which the body is ill prepared combat.

It was so thoughtful and another demonstration of your remarkable memory, to have offered to procure the essay on racial relations. I am doubly impressed and grateful to you for having mentioned it for, frankly, I had completely forgotten its existence. I think it would be better to hold it for a while longer, however, now that you mention it, I believe I could use it to advantage on another opus I have been turning over in my mind for some time, it seems so odd this had escaped my memory, --and I think I should prefer using it for something I have in mind, --in an altogether nebular state, --to do on my own hook at some future time, splicing it in between some personal experiences which might so turn that the impersonal and personal might tend to point up each other if placed in proper sequence. If you continue holding the item, I shall feel assured that I shall be able to lay hands on it next year or the next whereas if I try to keep track of it in my own somewhat dubious filing system, it might end up in the limbo at just the time I wanted most to draw on it.

It was so generous of you to assure me that you could make some out of the Old Bonita map which I sent along last week. I think

....I had believed you would not have done so.



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I set too high a store on such things so far as most people are concerned and this is probably because a sketch of a lay-out, no matter how crudely drawn, has a way of putting a place in clearer concept for me than pages of description, and if the one is accompanied by the other, the whole property becomes so clear in my mind that I feel almost as though I had visited the place. But obviously these things don't operate precisely like that for everyone and thus in being assured that you could make something out of it, I am twice glad.

The high winds that reached tornado proportions in Mississippi on the morning of the killing 18 or 20 this afternoon, when Celeste and I drove into town this morning. The day was like a rare June day in New England, sun and balmy, with a spanking breeze whistling along at about 35 miles an hour. Celeste had to get beautified and I wanted to confer with Charles Cunningham about some printed cards carrying Grandpere's likeness. In our conversation as we were driving in, Celeste asked me when I expected the Leutcher-Starks. I told her I hadn't heard that name mentioned in months. The other day, Monday, I guess, Cecilia Lawton, a Hatchitoches buddy of Caroline Dormon's, telephoned Celeste to inquire about the situation of the Chinese magnolias when I chanced to arrive for a spot of coffee. After a brief chat, Celeste turned the call over to me and Cecilia told me Caroline was wondering when the magnolias would be unfolding their beauty. I told her I would advise her later in the week when I would be able to estimate better. It turns out, from what Celeste told me this morning while speaking to her, Cecilia had mentioned that Caroline wanted particulars because the Leutcher-Starks wanted to drive over from Orange and come to Melrose under Caroline's auspices, and Celeste had supposed Cecilia had imparted as much to me. And so that's the way the things are twisting, and wouldn't it be interesting if la Dormon and the Leutcher-Starks chanced to blow in here on precisely the same day that la Storm did. I assume Caroline may know nothing about the proposed visit to Louisiana on the part of la Storm. I think I shall drop the Kleisers that night or tonight, having to do with magnolias and they can pass on when they want to to the Leutcher-Starks. As for Carolyn, she must be out of her mind for having wared so jealous about la Storm, she repeats herself by dragging the Leutcher-Starks to Melrose and I'll bet dollars to doughnuts she will end up in a "misere" over the Storm episode, her Orange friends got along as well at Yucca as did her Monck's Corner friends. But why Caroline has to rig up this visit through la Lawton instead of directly with me, I can't imagine unless she has in mind to surprise me or some such. In short, Miss Dormon is a sight and I don't care how she weaves her tangled web. L....

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Wednesday  
Tuesday, Ground Hog Day, being  
February 2nd, 1955.

Memorandum:  
And so the day dawned cloudless and so remained until first dark, at which time the waning moon took over in an equally unveiled heaven and, if that much talked off little animal over-slept and didn't awaken until dusk-dark, he still could see his shadow easily enough by the light of the moon. And from all that I gather that we are in for six more weeks of winter since the calendar calls for Spring to arrive anyway on March 21st, and if today was a sample of the balance of the winter, nobody will have any complaints since it has been sufficiently warm to start the Chinese magnolias unfolding at a great rate.

While I think of it, I want to report something that came up in conversation when Carolyn was here. She mentioned something about her friend who lives in Pacific Palisades and remarked that she was of Scandinavian descent, her father, having come to this country from Norway to Wisconsin, I believe. I asked Caroline if she thought racial prejudices were more in evidence where strong European concentrations carried over their native cultures and folkways in America where the group was sufficiently strong to dominate a particular region. She said she didn't know but that when she was visiting her friend in California, the latter's brother and his wife, formerly from Wisconsin, were living in the Hollywood area. The brother and his wife were want to drop by Pacific Palisades after the theatre and hours after Carolyn had folded up asking if they might have a drink, etc., and one night, and obviously assuming that because Carolyn hailed from Texas, she must be anti-negro, they brought an attractive couple of color with them, expecting to see Carolyn squirm in thus being confronted with the necessity of serving a round of drinks to people of African ancestry. Having thus attributed a racial bias, the Scandinavians were probably a little surprised to see how Carolyn arose to the occasion in serving a round of drinks and in entertaining their companions.



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of color but in a very short time, they found themselves baffled by the obvious pleasure manifesting itself as between the hostess and their two guests. Shortly, the Scandinavians made a move to depart but Carolyn turned on the social faucets full tilt and kept said Nordics, bored, baffled and dumbfounded, as conversation flowed on and drinks went round and round far into the night. Never again was Carolyn's early to bed routine disturbed by post-theatre guests, white or black.

In today's post came a letter from Helen which I read so hurriedly, I shall retain for another go-round before the mail goes forward on the morrow. I believe she wants to come this way this week end with a gentleman from Paris and perhaps Carolyn, but I am not sure. If that is the gist of the message, I shall get off a hurried message advising against same. My own calendar is too full and I have too many things I want to do right now to get bogged down in such entertainment. Besides, Helen ought to know Melrose well enough by now to realize that entertaining new-comers presents certain hazards. But, come to think of it, I guess Helen likes to travel in company, thinking as I do, of Lucille Masse and Ida and so on. Besides, Old Bonita is all rigged up for just such visitations and the absence of Chinese magnolias in that quarter should guarantee it against pilgrims at this season of the year.

The enclosure from Postell speaks for itself, I reckon I forwarded his of a week back, saying Frances Henry was seeking a job in New Orleans. Frances doesn't want to live in Hatchitoches because she doesn't like the people. She has told one or two of her acquaintances she envies them the friendship they have with me. I understand her income is about \$12,000.00 a year and she is possessed of a nest egg of a quarter of a million, --and can think of nothing to do for anyone, --except herself. How poverty stricken some people, financial secure, can make themselves.

The letter from la Montespan speaks for itself. I intentionally avoided making acknowledgement of her Christmas gift, feeling she is too closely tied up with Dan's wife and the Goldberg woman and other harlots of the same stripe. I shall apologize in a brief note but shall not, as I should like to do, tell her that I have no objection to harlots if the harlots are getting what they want either in sex, satisfaction or in money but when they are as dumb as she is, I don't want to get tangled up with them.

I'm hoping to finish off "Jedediah Smith and the Opening of the West" tonight. It's a dull book but does give one some inkling as to the daring, fortitude and unreasonable recklessness of those people who quickly expended their excessive energies in the wildernesses of the Rockies....

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Thursday, Feb. 3rd, 1955.

Memorandum: And so yawl is a-shiverin'..... And Ed Murrow tonight says an Eastern third of the nation faces another day of freezing temperature but he didn't acquaint the rest of the nation with the situation in which you already find yourself. I did gather from this morning's weather reports, however, that snow had fallen on Manhattan and that the thermometer was down into the zero neighborhood. I'm holding the thought that you are making it safely and that this Arctic blast doesn't induce a return of your affliction of recent date.

Either herewith or under separate cover, I shall enclose a couple of incoming bits of mail. I referred to Helen's letter yesterday, I believe. Dora tends to knock me down or do I simply imagine that he is annoyed at me for thanking him for his Christmas gift, --or, as he points out, for the gift which is not a Christmas gift, although at the moment the point seems a little too finely drawn for me to comprehend. In the past Dora has always me a Christmas gift. This year in December came the big box of records. As no other package arrived, I took this shipment to be this year's Christmas gift and thanked him accordingly. It seems so odd he is just getting about to correct me on my misinterpretation. Well, perhaps I was wrong to begin with and perhaps Dora was merely having one of those days.

The Segelou letter is characteristically sweet and it is interesting to know how things turn on the Teche, although that news does seem very sunny. If Carolyn is smart, she will cultivate the Segelous, I think, when she sets up shop in Pirates Alley.

As for Madam Marco, her letter suggests my inquiry regarding Jedediah Strong Smith turned just the trick I hoped it would since by her enthusiasm over the Smith family, she has evidently forgotten her momentary or rather her unending complications on the domestic scene and all moments for her that are freed for a few minutes from more pressing problems are worth a heap, I feel. Oddly enough, I'm not quite sure if she mean to tell me that the Jedediah Smith I have been reading about is the one whose family



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owned Retirement, Mantua and the adjoining plantations South of No but I gather the J. S. Smith I have been reading about is the same man of which she speaks since the adventures of mine coincide exactly with those she enumerates in her letter. The odd thing at my book, however, is that although Jedediah Strong Smith has a flood of relatives who are mentioned as living in Illinois and Missouri, a word is ever mentioned of the Hatcher father, brothers, etc., all the Hatcher Smiths were established well before the J. S. S. youth began his initial trek to St. Louis and thence into the Rockies and California to fame and fortune and to or toward Santa Fe to his mind. I am glad this matter isn't quite clear in my mind as to whether the two gentlemen are identical or if Dale Morgan made a big slip in his research, which doesn't seem probable, for being uncertain, can work this ground over again in my next letter to Atlanta and perhaps the straightening out of the thing will provide Madam Marc with more moments freed from the gloom of her immediate surroundings.

As the title of the book mentioned above is "Jedediah Smith and the opening of the West", it was a pleasant coincidence that the next book coming to hand is entitled "The World and the West", by Arnold J. Toynbee, although naturally the word, "West", appears in the successive titles have little or nothing to do, the one with the other. John Knight reads the latter and his voice sounds and, as the book deserves, it is read slowly, which in spite of my interest in the material, will probably set me to nodding as soon as the disk starts turning.

A flock of silver vases, not bad in line but much too ornate filigree design, readed J. H. today, representing certain purchases made in India. These items are fashioned by hand by the emigres from Pakistan to India, following the partition of the sub-continent a few years back. He sent a couple of foot high ones, and a couple of 7 or 8 inch ones, plus a decorated plate of wood or earthenware to Celeste. A nice little silver jug with cover for liquor and half a dozen silver liquor goblets and some vases went into his office file cabinet. I think he ordered one or two reproductions in mini of the Taj Mahal, probably in white marble, which haven't come there as yet.

Our threatened cold wave didn't materialize appreciably as the cold front got stuck somewhere in Oklahoma. But we did have a East wind and much cloudy sky which slows up the blossoming of the magnolias. Tonight it will remain in the 40's and will be in the 60's tomorrow, and then one of these days and all of a sudden, Flora will explode all over the place, I reckon. I do hope that the snow, ice and frosty air along your pathway may all vanish into thin air ever so soon.....

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Friday, February 4th, 1955.

Memorandum: How nice to find a surprise package in today's post. And how wonderfully thoughtful of you to prepare the two spools so they may be so readily adjusted to this machine I assume the present ribbon may still be used a little longer so far as clarity of type is concerned, but after a month of service, such as this machine gets, a fresh feeder undoubtedly becomes timely ready soon and what with your thoughtfulness having provided the instrument, the invigorated feeder may be so easily put into place at any convenient moment. It is such a feeling of security that you have thus provided that I cannot hope to express my gratitude although, somehow, I have a feeling that you can sense my feelings, even though I find it impossible to express them in words.

Our rainfall for January was an inch and a half short of average but today February gave every indication of trying to make up for it time by spilling a good shower on us, a hour before dawning and then returning with endless buckets in mid afternoon and the rain is still coming down at 9 o'clock tonight. I suppose the pull of the honkey tonk wasn't sufficient to outshine the dampness reigning down from the high and the secretaries, displaying more sense than usual, are all staying within doors. Hence today's few letters remain in my armoire unread. But none of these seem to be of particular interest and I'm glad the assistants are not sloshing round in the mud.

In his little house off in the field beyond the wood lot, seen from the window in little Miss Alberta's studio, Sam Peace remains a solitary figure. I suppose he is suffering from Bright's Disease. His ankles are swollen to an 8 or 10 inch diameter and his jaws are so inflated, the contour of his face suggests a bull. I have engineered him to a doctor a few times recently but that is difficult, as he doesn't want medical attention. Perhaps he has reached that stage wherein he is weary of living and if so, I can well imagine his resentment of people who pester him. I see to it that he is provided with food and tobacco and twice a day I do a bit of persuading as to medical attention. I find myself thinking of him now, off yonder in the field all alone and for all I know, he is getting just as much satisfaction out of his solitude as I am in mine, which, telepathy as between Melrose and Lyme being what it is, I never feel alone in spite of all the pity expressed by scatter-brains for me "all alone back there behind all those bushes".



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I must drop a line to Dr. Rand to tell him to come and see my patient. Sam stole off when it was time for Dr. Knipmeyer to appear on Thursday, which short-circuited my smartness yesterday. Perhaps I shall fare better in my next attempt. And then, too, I want to show Dr. Rand something in the botanical line he has never seen and I think he will be both pleased and puzzled, just I was on discovering it. The pear trees in this region are among the first to put on their leaves in the Spring, usually sometime March, and, like other deciduous plants that leaf out early, so they drop their leaves the earlier in autumn. But I have one that is different. It was growing much too close to a couple of magnolias on the barrier of the avant-cour when I erected that fence, and as it was a young tree but too heavily rooted to transplant, I trimmed it down to flexible size and then trained its branches to right and left, weaving them in and out between the pickets. A week or two back, I had in mind to put this espalier in order for the advent of Spring when Lo! I discovered that the leaves had remained evergreen all winter and today are just as fresh and stuffy as in mid summer, whereas every other pear tree is as leafless as any deciduous tree, say, in Central Park during these past days of your zero temperatures in that quarter. I must remember to call this to the attention of la Storm, Caroline, the Leutcher-Starks, etc., as all of them are tree conscious and be just as astonished, I suppose, as was I when I stumbled over the phenomenon.

The Government reduction of food surpluses has made itself felt in this area. Log gave J. H. a five pound box of cheese for the big house. He had received 3 packages of 5 pounds each, 2 or 3 gallons of powdered milk, a couple gallons of dried Pinto beans, 12 pounds of butter, two gallons of lard and I forget what else. The cheese is wonderful and I'm so glad at least the present hand out is doing some good rather than spoiling in some forgotten war house. Although she isn't scheduled to head out for Atlantic City and points North and East until a week from tomorrow, --th 12th, Celeste must be getting a running start in the beauty department, for she spend Tuesday morning at the beauty factory and this Friday morning. I suppose twice a week at the same counter is old stuff to people accustomed to such trade and no doubt L. J. has some who appear 5 or 6 times between Monday and Saturday but as I am ignorant of the myserties as to what is undertaken, and especially what is accomplished by such constant attendance, it all seems vaguely on the futile side to me, especially after viewing what are described as the results.

And so we head into another week end. May it be a quiet one for little Miss Lee. The package from Lyme guarantees mine.....

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re: Proud recording (last 5)

Sunday, February 6th, 1955.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your letter of February 1st in Saturday's post.

I was sorry to learn that your week end had turned out just as you had anticipated. How easily we find it, when given a certain place to contemplate and a certain gathering of people to consider, how utterly we can foresee the void which so often such a combination constitutes. I try to tell myself at such times that the hours that to me appear completely wasted do somehow provide a variation or an unwanted change of pattern which I would gladly avoid but which, like unpalatable medicine, may turn out to be ~~wither~~ somehow beneficial. After all, since we can't do anything about it, we might as well try to discover something of promise if not of performance.

I appreciate your kind words concerning the Internal Revenue business. There was a time limit on the ukase which forced me to pay through the nose unless I wanted to hire a lawyer which didn't seem wise at the moment, since the fees would probably have exceeded the tax. Now that I have had time to look into the circumstances, I shall await the next blast with equanimity and shall write a letter rather than a money order. I have never objected to paying taxes, assuming my share is on a basis others tared but I am resentful when taxes which have no justification are hurled at one on a time limit basis, giving one no time to inquire into the errors that some beaucrat has made.

Our Friday night rain brought us two and a half inches and it drizzled intermittently all day Saturday and today until 2 o'clock when blue sky took over and cooler weather moved in. We are promised for cool weather for the morrow, and if the sun finally puts the thermometer over the 50 mark, --today it reached 48, I reckon the magnolias will unfold over night and visitors will spring up out of mud puddles.

Friday's rains and Saturday's basketball game somewhere off Shreveport way, knock out the secretariat until late this evening when I was able to get your letter read, immediately after which interruption prevented further advance on the correspondence problem. I shall be luckier on the morrow, I think, so far as time allotted for such business is concerned but nothing to hand appears to be of much interest.



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I know not, from Helen's letter, if she anticipated passing this way on Monday or not. From the letter I wrote her, --assuming she had time to receive it, she would not make a round at Melrose, I think, and I sent a hurried note to that Marshall woman at the same time, thinking a word there might slow things up a little if the Waco message failed to get through. I haven't heard from Rudolph in response to my two letters, the first one telling him to come, the second telling him to delay making a round. Both were written before I went to Marshall, giving adequate time for an acknowledgement but perhaps he was hurt by my suggestion that he make it a little later. The Washington's Birthday week end ought to be a convenient time for him, I should think, but as I know not when the South Carolina contingent or the Orange, Texas outfit may breeze in, I shall not send a letter before hearing from him since it would be ever so much more convenient to handle each of the above named when Melrose and Yu are not already peopled.

I cannot tell you how indebted I am to you for having provided me with the observations you heard on the radio concerning the non-recording of Proust. The particulars provide me with just the ammunition I desired before beginning another assault on Robert Patterson. After I have had an opportunity to re-read your letter, I shall begin a double assault which may or may not start a smudge under Mr. Patterson's chair. Mrs. Roosevelt will receive one letter Mr. Agonsky one. I shall point out that while book burning is sufficient dramatic to make headlines, the suppression of the recorded words which are to the blind what the printed page is to the sighted, is precisely the same thing and that nobody either within or outside the Government has a right to deny the blind what is made readily to hand for the sighted. I shall stress the point that the first volume, Swann's Way, has already received official blessing and is available on disks, and that by thus making this first volume available, the Patterson decision to deny us blind the balance of the novel leaves us all suspended and dangling in mid air. I have a feeling that it would be easier for Mr. Patterson to have maintained his position, had thumbs been turned on the entire novel, but by approving of the first volume, he opened a trickle which the dam of an official frown cannot withstand. I shall ask Mrs. Roosevelt if she has any idea how fairness to blind readers can be effected in this instance. To Mr. Agonsky, however, I shall stress the point that this business parallels book burning since it denies a segment of society access to the printed word, a portion of which has been tantalizingly suspended before us, only to have the balance withdrawn. Next I shall do a little round with Russell Long, and somewhere in all this business perhaps a gleam of light may penetrate the gloom. It was your information concerning this matter that impelled me to take up arms again and I'm ever so grateful to you for providing the impulse.....

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Monday, February 7th, 1955.

Memorandum:

The enclosure from Dora, announcing his resignation from the University of Oklahoma, came as a surprise, --the news not the enclosure. From his last letter, it was obvious he was upset. I refer to the non-Noel matter of which he spoke at some length. And of course the present letter readily explains how or under what mental strain it was penned.

I find his explanation for leaving so sweet and so understandable but frankly, I regret that Norman couldn't become sub-tropical so that he might remain, for there he has friends of more than 20 years standing and there is something even more sad about the Florida move than in the case of the Hughes family from whom, by the way, I haven't heard from in ever so long.

But being a poet may provide compensations of greater magnitude than non-poets can imagine and I am certainly holding the thought that the place may be sub-tropical with no end of flowers and birds and potential friends.

Unfortunately, this was one of the letters I received along about last Friday and only opened today. I shall get an air mail off to him in the next post, it goes without saying.

Our rainy weather of the week end gave way to cloudless skies today and yet the thermometer somehow got stalled and never did get much above 50. We are promised the same pattern for the morrow, and the big moon rising over the African House at this moment suggests the weather bureau may have been correct.

Carolyn telephoned from Marshall this noon, saying she was going to Lafayette and had to stop to see someone in Hatchitoches about some picture or other and asked if I wouldn't like to ride with her as far as Lionel's place for a little visit. I told her I would not like to go anywhere but that she might stop here on her way. She said she would pass this way at 7. It is now 8. I believe she is going to make some post cards for the Hatchitoches area.



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has something more extensive for one of the oil companies in  
Lafayette to attend to.

She doesn't know it but I am laying out some photographic  
work for her to do when she takes up her residence in New Orleans.  
If any of the ante bellum buildings are still standing in Royal Street  
where Lion had his studio, and if his house which he occupied until  
his mysterious disappearance from the face of the earth is still  
intact, a picture of that might be in order, too.

I have in mind doing an article about the gentleman which  
might be saleable to some magazine or other if the slant were properly  
tilted so as to suggest that Lion is perhaps the most important  
patron saint of this pictorial age and therefore should be remembered by  
workers with cameras, attendants at movies and viewers of TV programs.  
This might be a bit far fetched but not so far as might seem at  
first glance. For I have recently been advised that Lion not  
only introduced Lithography into Louisiana but that it was he who  
brought in the first Daguerreotype machine or camera or whatever it  
was styled. And after doing a dab about this link between Europe  
and America Lion can emerge as a logical step in the ever mounting  
ladder as between the first camera of D. guerre and the latest  
contraption by Edison, and so through the movies and so on.

What I want to tuck into the article particularly is the  
fact that the 20th century will undoubtedly be known as the  
Age of Pictures, just as the 19th was known as the Century of  
Industrialization, the 18th as the Age of Enlightenment, etc., etc., and  
that Lion not only was one of the active forces in the 19th century who  
laid the groundwork for the pictorial 20th century but that he,  
himself painted the most amazing portrait ever executed north or south  
of the Mason-Dixon line. Somewhere along the line, something could  
be tossed into the article about an effort having been made, or to  
phrase it a bit more contemporaneously, a proposal has been made (to  
the D. A. R.) that a census of American pictures be taken - this  
movement having been initiated as a natural consequence of America's  
ever mounting consciousness of the role pictures play in such fields  
of contemporary life as entertainment, advertising, propaganda,  
political campaigning, education, etc., etc. I should think  
Look or Life should be the proper vehicle for such an article but perhaps  
Holiday might be persuaded to consider it if one wanted to stress either  
the old section of New Orleans, unpublished particulars about Daguerre or  
some such. Well, we shall see, and so things turn. I was so  
surprised to hear Ed. Murrow talking from London tonight for I didn't know  
he had been studying about such a hop....

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Tuesday, February 8th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Tea cups of pink, of white and of rose began appearing  
in the upper branches of the magnolias and mighty pretty they looked again  
the deep blue sky. The day was cloudless, even as yesterday, but the  
thermometer remained laggardly, which is perhaps just as well, since there  
is no particular rush about getting the parade under way.

Carolyn arrived a little before 9. Perhaps it was just as well  
I had not read Dora's letter last Saturday when it arrived, or was it Friday  
Be that as it may, I had the matter in mind and mentioned it to Carolyn  
who, in a manner reminding me of her reaction to news of Sister Frances Je  
and her book, said that she would be delighted if he would like to be-take  
himself to Old Bonita to remain as long as he pleased and that when  
summer arrived and if she should find herself heading out for Africa, he m  
want to borrow her Pirates Alley apartment if he had in mind vacationing f  
a while in the Crescent City. I passed along this news to him and  
I'm sure that whether he re-acts positively to it, he will, like any one,  
appreciate her kindness in offering him two such pleasant asylums.

As Carolyn had an appointment in Hatchitoches in the morning and anot  
in Lafayette in the afternoon, she got off right after breakfast. I was  
vaguely surprised, therefore, when the postman, half an hour later, handed  
her letter.

Carmen Breazeale telephoned me this afternoon to say that Carolyn had  
dropped in to see her and to tell her that she had secured the order for  
six thousand post cards which she had been anticipating in town and that  
she was returning tomorrow from Lafayette to do a round with her about dru  
up some other business. I might inject at this point that before leaving  
this morning, Carolyn observed that she thought she would give up the trip  
to Manhattan this Spring, with a view to undertaking same in the autumn.

Last night I took the opportunity to present my idea concerning the  
Lion story and on her next go-round, she will bring ample color films so t  
the portrait in colors may be taken, after the glass has been temporarily  
removed, for the reflections on the glass make it difficult to  
catch the somewhat subtle coloring easily. I shall cast about for  
all data available on Lion and while awaiting the arrival of such particul  
I shall outline an article which will be highly speculative as to details  
which may readily lend itself to being propped up satisfactorily with the  
comparatively few known facts. At the moment, I have in mind to



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tie in the mysterious disappearance of Lion with the fact that he was the artist who presented the world with a portrait, - a double one, - which was so devastating a reminder of the brotherhood of man during those years of turmoil in New Orleans, - 1864, that seemingly, as has been the case of other courageous people, he placed his life on the altar of humanity. To make the magazine editor nibble at the story, it will be imperative to it a kinship to the contemporary scene and that may be accomplished through a symposium on the part pictures, --magazine, movies and TV play on today's average citizen and show that the painter, Lion, although first in that field, had the vision to recognize the possibilities of the Daguerreotype and the Lithograph.

It was good hearing from Lillian Trickell after all these months. I think you will agree with me that her observations concerning the world the section about the duck are up to her usual standard.

I heard the ultimate in silly stories today, demonstrating the confusion overtaking the old poor when overtaken by new riches:

A man, farming a flock of worn out acres was trying to hang on to his property. He owed the bank money of the property but they kept advancing credit since nothing could be realized on it. Then came oil, - gobs of it in appreciation, the former borrower, after paying his mortgages, said he to present Cadillacs to each member of the bank concerned with his earlier loans. He was assured of their appreciation but was told they couldn't accept cars but since the man was adamant about doing something, the cashier suggested golf clubs. The man asked how many would be in order and blinked a little when told about 14 would do. He departed and didn't re-appear again for several weeks when he put in his appearance, carrying a brief case filled with legal documents. He handed over the papers and explained:

"I was able to get 14 Golf Clubs alright but I'm sorry that five of them don't have swimming pools."

So much for tomfoolery and now I must roll up my sleeves and knock off a stack of mail. Tonight I am enjoying the luxury of having the doors and windows open although because of the coolness, a fire seems pleasant at the same time. From my desk, I can see the gourds suspended from the eaves on the gallery and the rising moon paints them a marvelously mellow gold, like huge oranges out of Hesperides.

How unexpectedly Formosa was taken out of first place by the new twist in the Kremlin Disorders for the world can certainly come from that quarter the big bad wolf's bark will eventually will be recognized as worse than his bite.....

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P. S.

1945, I think, was the date of publication of the Dictionary of Artists, Sculptors, etc., referred to below.

7195

Wednesday, February 9th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Atmospherically, today was a carbon copy of yesterday, a duplicate of the blue sky, glorious sunshine, a cool breeze and more pink, rose and white chalices unfolding amidst it all.

And the high point of it all was a visit by little Miss Hunter. She came just afternoon and said that her grandson was worrying about his birth certificate for he thought it was time for him to register for the draft. She could remember the year he was born, -- that same year that J. C. died, and I probably knew when that was. I did. And so while she was here I telephoned Dr. Knipmeyer's office to see if the birth had been registered. I explained that the year was 1937, for I chanced to remember that from events transpiring before my advent and since births in this parish are registered in year book that simplified things. But when they couldn't find any J. C. Hunter in that volume, they inquired as to the month and I paused to inquire of Clemence. She said it was at Water Melon time, and that particular I passed along, which seemed to clarify nothing. But by jogging my memory as to when water melons come into their own, we touched upon some magical month and tossed in a date for good measure, --all of us having a heap of fun in the doing and on the morrow, J. C. Hunter, grandson of the local artist will be provided with a birth certificate and before water melon time has faded, J. C. Hunter will be equipped with a certificate and Uncle Sam a prospective draftee.

On the surprise side of the day's news, Carmen telephoned me this morning on behalf of Carolyn, saying the latter had returned from Lafayette last night, registered at a local hotel and was having mid day dinner with her and wondered if the coast might be clear at Melrose so that she could get a color film of the African House between 2 and 3. She could and she did, although I explained that Dolly Walmsley of San Antonio was expected at 3.

And so Carolyn came at 2 and "struck" the picture and paused long enough to get Dora's address and to report that she had seen Caroline Dromon in town during the morning and that Caroline was planning to make a round at Melrose around 3. I never did see anything suggesting the likes of Briarwood, which is perfectly alright.



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I should have injected before this late date that just as I was sealin last night's memo, my telephone rang and Kay said "Hello". Since the operator usually reports that Charleston is calling so and I assumed Kay was calling from town and was accordingly surprised when she said she was calling from the Bluff. She said she had had a slight operation but was alright again and that she and la Storm simply wanted to say Howdy. And so we said Howdy and then la Storm got on the wire to explain that the severe cold of last week had knocked out the South Carolina camellias and that therefore the Garden Club tours for March (March) were cancelled and that she and Kay had decided to remain at The Bluff until the first of March, after which they would head out for Louisiana and that they hoped to spend a day or two with me at Melrose. Misere.....

And so, reverting to this afternoon, Dolly arrived just after Carolyn headed out for Marshall. She's the same old Dolly, good hearted and boudy. She left Frances Henry and her mother at Celeste and came alone to sit with me for a couple of hours before going back next door for supper. She had nothing of interest to report but had lots of satisfaction in reporting same. She said she had but recently learned that Dan was married and had a child. I got Frances hadn't been talking. She also opined that she greatly regret Paynie's death as he was "the flower of the flock". Believing every has the right to his opinion, I naturally didn't demur. But the whole session was might dull and I was delighted when I could get on with my usual routine.

I'm writing Bob Segelou tonight, asking him to drop by the Court in New Orleans to consult that 1864 and 1867 records concerning Jules estate. There seem to be two dates for Lion's disappearance, 1864 and 1865, --I am hoping it is the former, since there was probably more turmoil in New Orleans in that year, and if memory serves me correct 1867 was the year in which his estate was settled, --rather early, since 7 years usually elapses between a disappearance date and a settlement some disaster and the pressure of heirs, --and Lion had none, come up Of course I am hoping the inventory of the estate may appear in the settlement, too. I believe a book entitled Dictionary of Painters, Sculptors and Writers, or perhaps some other arrangement of the artists their progression is the book mentioning Lion as having introduced the Daguerreotype into Louisiana in 1839. If you should ever chance across such a book, I should be glad if you would keep me in mind regarding that point and also the date of his death, which I believe in that book is given as 1865, with no date of birth being given. I fear this is a mighty dull memo. Perhaps I shall do worse but I hope on the morrow.....

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Thursday, February 10th, 1955.

Memorandum:

"And a wind came out of a cloud by night,  
Killing and chilling my Annabelle Lee."  
But Mr. E. A. Poe's lines don't precisely apply to the big old pewter pitcher, heavily burdened with the most delicious "bees" you ever saw, all nodding prettily at each tap of the keys. Bees are some variety of daffodill or narcissus or some such and I plucked an armful of them this afternoon when the thermometer stood at 72, for at noon the rain had predicted that the cold front which had passed over Shreve heading this way, would sag about 50 degrees before morning and thought the bees on the morrow would be faring as well on my desks as in an ice cake.

And of course I am now delighted that the Chinese "magnolias" dwaddled along the way for many of the are sufficient still behind in the parade so as to offer a dab of color next week after the Arctic blast has evaporated.

I seem to have produced a Denholme margin without noticing it until now but I trust you won't mind.

Today's incoming mail was an odd assortment, as, say, the Vaccarini epistole, along with the snapshot, which I don't want back, will demonstrate, come to think of it, the invitation to visit Chicago and the Cane River mulatto representatives now living there (smile) seems to be quite a contrast to the initial letter originating in that quarter.

Dora sent along a package containing a manuscript on which we worked or perhaps half a dozen chapters of other things on which we had expended energies. I think you will find his letter a little confounding, in that he seems so vague about his plans, which, for all I know, may be just as vague in his own mind. I think, however, he would have done better, had he thought them out a bit in advance and advised me accordingly, for it does seem to be within the realm of possibility that I may eventually land him some advantageous spot for listening to the black bird and sniffing the h



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suckle, etc., as on the banks of the Cooper River or some such, but I shall do the best I can as between Marshall and Moncks Corner, even though I don't seem to have much of a shoe string to go on.

While I think of it, let me say that I was able to secure the bi certificate and since you yourself, even as I, might have been a little hazy as to the precise month and day of "water melon Time", may I say that that magical date is July 21st which certainly goes far in addition to the sum total of our general knowledge.

Last night I finally finished the book on Africa which I have been reading off and on for too many weeks. I learned a heap of things I didn't know and accordingly am glad I finally got through the entire volume. From what was put into the volume, --it's a pretty big subject for a single volume, I decided that I should like Tonganika, --or however it is spelled, best, if I were to select one country to explore in the Dark Continent. From the radio reports of this morning, things are getting ever closer to the boiling point in the southern coastal (coastal) section of the continent, which was to be expected, according to the writer of this book which was probably printed along about 1953. Apparently the Dutch in the Johannesburg region are determined on segregation in the roughest fashion and, as Howard K. Smith remarked early in January, some sort of an explosion is bound to come down that way more in a matter of weeks than in months or years.

Tohand is H. Bazun's "God's Country and Mine" about which I know nothing. I'm not even sure of the spelling of the author's name. From talking book topics, however, there was a dab of reference to it and, as I recall, it was said the book was by a Frenchman who had come to this country to live. I shall be thinking of Mr. Bachelier as I read it, perhaps, for I should have liked to have had his papers indicating his own impressions of the place he selected to finish out his last 40 years. But Mr. Bachelier was a citizen of the world to begin with and so perhaps his own impressions might not have been too different from all the da Vincis who never really knew the meaning of nationalism and found home where ever they chanced to find themselves and in Leonardo's case it always seemed to evident that it didn't make much difference to him whether he was in Florence or Rome, the castle of the Sfortzas in Milan or at his own chateau de Clour in the Loire.

I'm hoping on the morrow to work on the new ribbon. I hope reading my recent notes haven't been too much of a strain, especially water melons and such tomfoolery was of such a trashy nature.....

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Friday, February 11th, 1955.

Memorandum:

And so this afternoon about 1:30 J. H. sent me a messenger, saying that Mr. Pipes had telephoned, getting the house servant across the fence, and saying he would be at Cypress on the 2:20 train.

Frankly, I was astonished, as I had supposed he had not planned to leave Norman before the 12th.

And so I met him and so we have had a prolonged chat as between 2:20 and 11:15 which is now.

He will leave tomorrow morning with a view to seeing Carolyn and then en train at Shreveport for Gainesville, Florida where he will vacation for a while with friends. After that he doesn't know but has in mind to find something in the Dallas - Fort Worth area.

It seemed to me he hadn't changed a bit since last I saw him 12 years ago except, perhaps to grow a little younger. We dropped by little Miss Hunter's cabin and he found in Clemence what I had discovered in him, -- an obvious discovery on her part, -- and his, of the fountain of youth.

It was grand being able to chat endlessly, and, of course, when correspondence has pretty well covered the in-between period of a twelve year space, one easily takes up direct conversations as readily as though the interval of personal contact had been but a day.

Our cold snap continues with ice a quarter of an inch thick on the pot. The magnolias which had come into flower are as thoroughly cooked as they were last year on the night before Irma and Farley arrived. It is said the cold will relax by Sunday and then I shall hold my breath to see if all or only some of the



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February 13th, 1955

banana plants will crash to the ground.

I d dn't see the ladies across the fence this morning. They had left early-early for Mansura where Madam Regard will remain for the next couple of weeks. I suppose J. H. and Celeste will leave for Atlantic City by train on Saturday. I shall try to get their Manhattan schedule and send it along by air mil although I believe Celeste said the other day she was dropping you a line concerning same. As they will undoubtedly be traveling while in the city with associates from this area, you may meet some new faces.

Last night I got around to read a couple of pages from "God's Country and Mine" by Jacques Barzun or however his name is spelled. From the first couple of pages, I gathered the book is going to be splendid as an appreciation of America and is done in the style somewhat after the manner of one Christian Belle. Along about the second chapter, he makes a point as to the badness of American concepts by citing the fashion in which Eva Peron handled things in The Argentine and how it as unthinkable she would expend any of the billion dollar fund at her disposal for anyone not a fervent supporter of her husband's political and religious tenant whereas in the United States, Mrs. Roosevelt, in contrast to little Miss Eva, was forever giving herself to worthy causes, unmindful of the political or religious concepts of those to be helped by the humanitarian causes she contributed to. The author remarks that efforts are being made to make a saint out of little Eva but for him, Miss. Roosevelt in the one who will receive his vote. Naturally you and I would be the first to rise up and say Amen to such sentiments.

A note from Hatcher on stationary, --although there is no signature, states that the initial shipment of a dozen and a half Mansions of Hatcher seem to be moving satisfactorily, whatever that means, but it is nice to know that they haven't been swamped by the inexpensive merchandise that has cascaded all over our market. Tightening our belts and holding on until Pilgrimage time, perhaps we shall see a gleam of sunshine from that quarter regardless.....

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7201

Sunday, February 13th, 1955.

#### Memorandum:

"hat a pleasant Sabbath and how often during the day have I thought of little Miss Lee, holding the thought that the same peace and quiet might likewise be obtaining in Lyme.

Saturday was all sunshine and frost but things moderated this morning and by 3 o'clock this afternoon, the ice in the iron pots had melted and the thermometer had jumped to 60. I am luxuriating in that very throw-away indulgence of having a dab of heat issuing from the butane heater but leaving the doors and windows open, for a vagrant breeze is blowing from the Gulf and it is so pleasant to play at summer only a dozen hours after things were frozen stiff.

I'm grateful to God for the way things clicked in regard to Dora on Saturday morning. On Friday night, I had pointed out to my unexpected guest that I sincerely believed in the "adam's admonition: "Never let the Henrys know your business".

And so before saying goodnight, it was decided I would telephone Carolyn before breakfast on Saturday morning to make an appointment with her to see Dora at 2 o'clock when the bus would reach Marshall, thus giving them time to wisk out to Old Bonita and give the place a once over, after which Dora would take a train or a bus to Shreveport and thence hit Southeastward toward Florida, the point of the Marshall hejira being that it would afford Dora a chance to see if he liked Carolyn and Old Bonita if, at some future date, he decided he would like to sniff honeysuckle in that direction. As Carolyn was going to Dallas the next day or so, this necessitated the brief stop over here, and what with a lot of Henry cross wires undoubtedly likely to be operating just before J. H. left for Atlantic it appeared ever so wise, --and for other reasons, that his initial vi here be brief. Accordingly I telephoned Carolyn a little after 7, and learned that her schedule was in confusion, caused by bursting pip at Old Binta and that she was planning not only the Dallas trip but there would be Helen and Fred and so journey on to Waco so that the meeting with Dora couldn't very readily be rigged up. I told her I understood perfectly and meant it. At the big house, I found Pat,



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Eugene and Dora had arrived before my appearance was made manifest. During breakfast, I was turning over in my mind how best I could handle impending business so as not to seem to be pushing out and unexpected guest but at the same time get the Florida jaunt underway with delay. And so, with Eugene and Pat ahead, Dora and I walked to the store together, as Dora was going to town with Pat. I lied and said I had not been able to establish a satisfactory connection with Marshall and asked Dora to telephone me from the bus station. And so, after being received in a very friendly manner in his office by J. Dora and Pat headed for town and I for Yucca. My telephone rang half an hour later. I was prepared to tell Dora to change the Shreveport trip to New Orleans and drop around to visit the Segelous with the operator said "Marshall is Calling". It was Carolyn, asking if it was too late for her to change her mind. It wasn't. The initial plan as envisioned was agreed upon. I replaced the receiver. The phone rang again. It was Dora and I told her Carolyn would indeed meet him at 2:10, and that was that.

Later, at 9 o'clock mail time, I saw J. H. at the store. He asked me to send you an air mail, giving you the data concerning their presence at the Astor from Wednesday night until Saturday night when they leave for Montreal. I accordingly typed the message on his machine and I guess I ever forgot to sign it, but I reckon you would recognize the sender, even though the machine on which I wrote wasn't this one, although the signature, too, was just as vague. He said it would be so nice if you all could have dinner or some such.

So much for the hurly-burly of Saturday morning as between 7 and 9

J. H. and Celeste got off around 2 o'clock I believe. I shall drop them a note on the morrow to tell them of the death of the mother of Mrs. Alphonse Prudhomme at Oakland, Bermuda. Lucille Prudhomme's mother was a sister of Miss Kate Keator of Campti, not long since departed.

My Sunday was altogether pleasant. Pat and I dined alone across the fence. I did not have a solitary pilgrim today, although I did see three or four, in fact, but I guess the Spring thaw impelled people to home and let Spring take over the magnolia section in good earnest before this way. I did some reading, which was made the more pleasant by the way I could busy myself in folding and putting in envelopes some of the cards of which a couple of samples are enclosed. I think Grandpere turned out rather nicely. I was astonished at the other card which was not what I ordered, having requested that a reproduction of the Melrose Plantation plate designed be used. But I can dispose of these alright and I shall give some to Celeste for her birthday on Feb 25th and she will like the design alright. Do let me know if you would care for any extra samples of these cards. I can't imagine you would but I did want to say I shall be glad to supply if extra ones for scrapbook or whatever should seem to be in order....

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P. S. I suppose Columbia continues to publish Invitation to Learning in magazine form or some such. I suppose the one about Proust might appear early in the summer, and if you should chance upon it, I shall be glad if you will send a copy for me.

Monday, February 14th, 1955.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your air mail of the 11th in today's post.

Divest yourself of your fear that letter upset me. I probably be-spoke myself in some clumsy fashion in responding and for that I would ask your forgiveness. In letters both to Mrs. Roosevelt and to Martin Agronsky, I did not touch on the "Invitation to Learning" program and no mention was made of the Charlu aspect. In the one I stressed the hope that Proust might be made as readily available for the blind as for the sighted and in the other I placed my emphasis on the book burning aspect of the thing.

I am tremendously indebted to you for telling me of this broadcast, for that is what started me going ahead on this matter, and had you not done so, the thing might have dwaddled along further. Do you recall or is there a notation in the telephone book as to Mrs. Roosevelt's Madison Avenue office address. I sent the first letter to Hyde Park but should I send a follow-up and should I not receive her response before, I thought the use of the Madison Avenue office might be in order although she may no longer be at that address.

I was sorry to learn that hurly-burly has been the word for so many recent week ends but I can well understand how enthusiastically we all shall be looking forward to the arrival of Spring and the impulse that will take some slap into the country while others will content to drink in the greenery of the park without feeling the impulse to chase so far to catch a glimpse of a blade of grass. I join with you in hoping Spring may be early this year.

There were letters from 908, little Miss Denholme and Carolyn. I enclose Robina's which I read just after yours but I did not get around to read Carolyn's as Kansas pilgrims came just as we had reached that point. I suppose it must have been written prior to the telephone conversation on Saturday so probably was merely a bread and butter business. Carmen Breazeale telephoned



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me earlier in the afternoon, saying she had had a letter from Old Bónita, remarking upon the pleasure of an afternoon and evening sitting with Mr. Pipes, prior to his return to Shreveport and Gainesville, so from that, I conclude, everything went along smoothly at that first encounter.

The day was like summer without the kintense heart but with the thermometer around 70, I came to the conclusion that I had better do some transplanting forthwith if I had any idea of getting head of mounting sap. Andy gave me a hand and by noon I felt as though I had done a day's work and accordingly proceeded at reduced speed during the afternoon. I had two or three visitors, including one from little Miss Clemence who brought Louise, who is little King's wife. The latter had recently acquired a clock that Zelma had told me about and as I had manifested interest, Louise brought it for me to look at. It is one of those little round one covered by a glass bell jar and, as I recall, needs winding but once a year or some such. I wish she had brought her little daughter with her, for I understand the little one is as gay as a button. Louise is much lighter than white girls with a good sun tan. Little King is so dark, I am curious to see what hue the offspring came up w I believe little King is still in the neighborhood of G.

Your reference to St. Valentine took me off center, for somehow that date and the birthday of A. Lincoln, Esquire always have a way of slipping up on me unawares. It seems odd I didn't hear some reference to both on the radio although my

listening to what the radio has to say has been mighty sketchy of la what with sleep seeming to catch up with me almost as soon as my head touches the pillow. I did hear the news concerning Lincoln Day political dinners but somehow the fact that it was Mr. Lincoln's natal day somehow never crossed my mind, although I think the 13th is that particular anniversary, although one never hears much about it down this way, which is certainly stupid, since by now he ought to be recognized even south of the Mason-Dixon Line as one of our greatest men. It just occurs to me the Democrats will be celebrating the Jackson-Jefferson Day ere long and at the moment I can't say if their birthdays came at the same time or not, as I don't seem to remember much about Jackson's birth or death although nobody can forget John Adams and Jefferson both died on the forth of July. I shall be early at the post office in the morning and in between times, I shall be blessing you or your nice letter which has made me so happy. I append a P. S. at the top of this memo.

7205

Tuesday, February <sup>15</sup>14th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Here it is St. Valentine's Day, and in response to the question put by the splendid inquiry, my answer is but so definite:

"Yah, man....I sure is you Valentine.

It goes without saying that I have played and re-played the Jimmy Ameche rendition of Mr. Fitzgerald's "Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam, and then re-read it again. For 20 years I have waited for the opportunity and it has been worth waiting for. And with all due respect to Dr. David Eugene Smith, I am so entranced that this version is not his but Mr. Fitzgerald's which is so wonderful. How can I say other than my thanks through the expression of your own sentiment that it would be so nice to enjoy it together. But while at the moment, that isn't within reach, it will be so eventually and how happy it makes my soul to contemplate just that.

And in the mean time, I have your message to treasure, --it is so gay and so lively and delighted the soul of my secretary almost as much as it did mine, I think, not, to be sure, because of the sentiment it embraced but because of the gay design, the little number that jumped up when opened and the general abandon of the race it depicted.

It has been such a happy Valentine's Day for me and blessings be Lyme for having made it so.

Our weather continues warm which is just another way of saying that the Primavera urge seems to be setting automobile wheels to spinning and that today the road runners succeeded in arriving at precisely the same hour as the secretaries but I solved that problem by running through the mail first, -- yesterday's unread epistle from Marshall and the one coming to hand today concern Dora's visit which, I take it, must have turned out quite satisfactory to both the lady and the gentleman.

The reference in the one letter has to do with an idea I had propounded as to the possibility of enlargement of a pastel painting



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of which I have spoken recently. On two points, I feel that this particular item belongs to Lestan, -- both from the Madam and Lyle, but a disreputable member of the family has on more than one occasion cast eyes of yearning upon it, and I accordingly think it not unwise to give thought as to its ultimate disposition, especially if the article which I have been outlining, should ever see publication.

As to the matter touched on in the second letter, concerning Miss Clemence in Pirates Alley, that is a little more difficult to imagine although the idea isn't bad. It goes without saying that I have no notion of being one of the trio as suggested for a duet in such a setting would be quite adequate.

I cannot help laughing in my beard at the physician whose medicine, designed to improve the patient, only succeeded in cultivating taste on the patient's part for more of the same medicine. Since the turn of the year, I have bombarded Carolyn with suggestions having to do with the (with the) wrapping up of several tag-end articles and up to the present writing, it would appear that I have succeeded only in cultivating a desire on her part for more admonitions. The thought reminds me of a sentence of her mother's:

"If I could only sometimes hold Carolyn back and push forward her brother, I should feel the training of my children had been much more successful."

Just before supper, J. H. telephoned the store to inquire about local weather and farm operations. The clerk forgot to ask him about the situation in Atlantic City. This noon the news mentioned rising temperatures along the East Coast but I presume any thermometer reading seems to be in the right direction, following last week's cold snap anywhere in the nation.

Mrs. Wood dropped in for a brief call this morning. I was too engaged in gardening to really want to see anyone but I made the most of her visit by asking her to read me the article on Hinduism in last week's life and felt well re-paid for running through it a second time. I think the condensation of such a broad subject altogether excellent. I shall be curious to see how they handle Christ in view of "Clare Euce Looth's" well-known fervent attitude toward the Vatican. I reckon Martin Luther will be called upon to play what may well be styled second fiddle.

And now to my Reading Machine and a resumption of my Valentine message. It has been such a happy day and tonight's reading is going to be so pleasant.....

7207

Wednesday, February 16th, 1955.

Memorandum:

We had such a pleasant shower this afternoon, followed by a couple of hours of sunshine which kept the thermometer up in the mid 70's.

And after the shower came pilgrims, -- three sets, to upset the secretarial applecart. I'm glad nobody can see my downy couch. It's a tempest of correspondence and manuscripts, each placed in its own neat pile and puzzling me no end as to how I shall be able to move them eventually without getting the piles mixed up. But eventually I must go to bed and so I shall try to unravel the mare's nest but not before I have had a shower, -- already accomplished, had a little chat with you, turned out some correspondence and had a little round with the Reverend Khyyam.

Tonight is show night at the honkey-tonk. The secretaries after waiting two hours for pilgrims to be gone, were fighting to do a dab of reading so they could get the where-withal to get into the show and we were in the midst of a sweet letter from Sister Frances Jerome, asking a number of questions on points she needs clarified, when the telephone rang. It was Carolyn, asking what the magnolias were doing. That was easy. They aren't doing anything. She said she had just talked with Helen who is going to New Orleans on Sunday and that Helen would like to drop by here on the way to see me. Carolyn said she thought she might run down to the Crescent City, too. I am holding the thought their visit may be as brief as the last time the two were here together, -- about five minutes, as I recall. I can only wonder how Carolyn ever gets anything done and whence comes the money for the gasoline. Oh, Lord, how true it is that we know the strangest people.

Carolyn also said she was calling from Marshall, that she had received a flock of messages from Mr. Pipes. As I haven't heard a peep as yet, I inquired if he had finally reached Gainesville and she said he had. That's good. This flurry of messages obviously indicates vast satisfaction on his part with his Old Bonita visit, I should imagine. How nice if he would only fall in love with Carolyn -- and sit on her.



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If the "traveling girls" should stop here on Sunday, I must remember to tell Carolyn I have a perfect substitute for me on the balcony at 635 Pirates Alley, --Joe Gilmore, of course. If the proper news photographers could be rigged up and John McClure be at home to record the doings, we might have a picture of Carolyn in the middle, with the Cane River primitive artist on her left, serving a biscuit and tat literary shadow, Joe Gilmore, on her right, pouring coffee. What's that insignia on the Metro-Goldwyn Mayer seal: -- "Art Thanks the Artist" or some such. Well that could be the general idea although Miss Ramsey on a broomstick would be truer to life, I should think, what with her incessant road-running.

One thing that delighted me about this afternoon's shower was the promise that it would knock out all prospective pilgrims and according I began knocking out some more pages for the Lion article. I was going along pretty smoothly when Martha and Jose Garcia y something or other, from the Pineville Louisiana College appeared. hat ended the Lion business but it is better talking with live artists than writing about dead ones and so I gave myself that pleasure, only to discover that Senora Garcia's mama and papa, once of Memphis and now of Missouri, were lost in the local bushes. Jose is sort of 30ish, rather delicate of frame with a distinctly boyish face, the youthfulness of some appearing to worry the young gentleman, for he has concealed it as much as possible by cultivating an all-over red beard which reminds me of a snapshot I once saw of Debussy, --which wasn't pretty. Last summer they went to call on Clemence when passing this way, --artists calling on an artist, but as soon as they had departed, Clemence came flying through the bamboo to explain to me that she was frightened by the man in the red beard. Jose speaks only Spanish and French and Clemence speaks only French and English but somehow Jose understood that Clemence spoke Spanish only and so he harangued her in that tongue and she responded in English, making nothing of what he had to say and, from her presentation of the visit, it must have been a dud and a bomb, all at the same sitting.

The note from Sister was an unexpected plaisir. The card, signed Dell or some such is from Madame Chalkley. Odd how Mary Rhodes who knew of the friendship between Dr. Bulter and me, never mentioned his death.

But now I must get to the mail and after that the mare's nest and thence to mein lieber Omar and so to bed.....

7209

Thursday, February 17th, 1955.

Memorandum:

There were quite a few pieces of mail today and so many of them hand written. That Dora was operating long hand is no surprise but I didn't expect Bob Segelou to toss off two or three pages under his own steam.

I shall send Dora's letter along a little later, for I have not rounded up some of the points as yet. I did understand, however, that he had contacted Robina, had had an automobile towed of the town with her and, I believe, had placed his trunk in the Denholme attic before writing me and heading out for Florida. Father Robal from across the river came to see me and pick up some of the Grandpere cards and I set him to work on the long hand epistles which had stumped the secretaries. He could ratt the things off readily enough but after he had begun, I recalled that Madam Regard had confided in me that she always goes to confession in Hatchitbches rather than in her own Parish Church across the way because she can never understand anything Father Robal says. I was in precisely the same boat and so Dora's letter will have to await a more gifted reader on the morrow.

Our lovely Spring weather continues, all blue and gold and sagging magnolia blossoms or ex-blossoms and a flock of lovely white cranes skimmed along the surface of the river this morning at dawning. It was such a delicious sight to drink in before the day's machinery got to turning. And the asperin boys were tumping away with their ratty-tat-tat before sun up. I may or may not have explained that some of my negro friends who used to talk about the peckerwoods for wood peckers once went into gales of merriment when I explained to them how we could make a million dollars by serving the needs of the wood peckers who were bound to use at least one each of asperin everyday if somebody would only tell them the stuff is available after they have banged their heads for a while on the turnk of a tree.

Of course the sunshine and balmy breeze brought out the



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Thursday, February 17th, 1955

pilgrims, too, but I mustn't attribute their advent to the weather exclusively for untold numbers of people have been heading in the general direction of New Orleans for the past week and the radio is full with accounts of the parades that have been going on for the past several days in anticipation of Mardi Gras. I am also catching some Californians, too, heading, not South, but East, to anticipate the big doings in Hatcher which, I suppose, begins about the first of March as usual. Surely there must be some vast compensation in getting one's self jammed into the Mardi Gras crowds but how anyone would wilfully jockey self into such a crush, I cannot imagine. On Monday night, the radio remarked that tourist places within a radius of 75 miles of the Crescent City were already filled to capacity and of course the hotels have been reserved from one year to the next for as long as I can remember. Little old Lionel Jeanmard, come to think of it, must be as busy as a

I read a couple more pages from the Jacques Barzun book last night, discovering that after absorbing the Khyam lines, I was too wide awake to go to sleep. The chapters I struck were less about "God's Country And Mine" than about some of the author's religious beliefs, and before I knew what I was up to, I was discarding Jacques Omar for a second go-round and liking the top and bottom of the sandwich better than the filling.

Mitchell, the ore, came to see me today for advice regarding his daughter who was Celeste's servant last year until July when she was married by the Justice of the Peace in Cloutierville to a gentleman making his home in Houston. Ruby was back along in September or October and "great with child". Mitchell said they had learned that Ruby's husband already was married and the proud father of two children which makes or promises to make Mitchell a not too proud grandfather. Details regarding engineering Ruby into clinical care was the burden of his problem and we got that settled with dispatch and even found time for a quick glass of wine which seemed to lift the gloom a little momentarily for said ore.

I listened to a re-broadcast of the speech of the Secretary of State said to be a "clarification" of the Chinese fandango. I am certainly glad no attempt was made to add confusion to the Administrations position for I discovered I understood even less after listening to the speech I did before.

Naturally my thoughts are casting about in the direction of Times Square tonight, wondering if a contact has been made with the R. E. Aers.....

8187

7211

Friday, February 18th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Ho, hum....or does one say high, ho, hum or perhaps one doesn't say.

Carmen Breazeale telephoned this morning to ask if she might bring her nephew, William Phillips of Chicago, down for a 1 chat "right after closing time at the Chamber of Commerce. She co The office closes at 5. She arrived at 7:30, bringing not only her nephew but his mother, her mother and another lady.

They are charming people but I'm not much on social gatherings after sun down and the sun was really well down by the they departed.

Our summer weather continues and the radio mentions the East as enjoying a mild spell but we are promised a cold snap on Saturday night again and I suppose it will eventually reach the Coast, too, but perhaps the worst of it will have spent itself by Washington's birthday so that everyone may spend his time, inside out, as the spirit moves, and I'm holding the thought that all may be "so" for a day of relaxation and the opportunity to do nothing.

My day shaped up in such a way as to get no further with Dora's letter but the one in type from Robina seems to cover that meeting pretty well and it was good to hear from friend Postell. I shall ask him if he has an extra copy of his travelogue on the Cane River country, as presented to the physicians visiting the Crescent City. I am not sure Postell was right in assuming the doctors would like to hear anything about any subject outside the trade. Postell would, little Miss Lee would, Dr. Rand would, I would, but.....most of the doctors I have known, with very rare exceptions, are like specialists in most fields of pedantry, -- interested exclusively in the art of making money through the practice of their particular brand of hocus-pocus.



7212

Friday, February 19th, 1955.

first instance transpired when a couple of rather pleasant ladies wringing their hands over the fate of the Chinese magnolias, expressed delight over the jonquills and going into raptures over various types of greenery that had escaped the cold. I started to laugh outright and then realizing nobody had intended being funny, I checked myself abruptly when one of the visitors expressed her never failing delight over "flora and fauna". Imagine. And then, a few hours later, after the day's work was done, I was recalled haphazardly when, in poking fun at somebody, the author employed put in somebody's mouth, the self same expression. The second encounter was even more unexpected than the first and I at least alone so that I could giggle out loud.

I am really surprised to note the increasing numbers of people passing this way, en route to New Orleans. With four more days before the pageants are concluded and the costumes packed away for next year, I should think everyone would be so exhausted, it would take another week to get over the headache and my guess is that those who have participated in the frolic for so many days will find themselves worn out that there will be scant impulse for sight-when they finally start heading back home up North.

Tomorrow, I suppose, we shall be honored by the presence of two or more of the Went offspring. The "little girl", as J. H. refers to her, is now about 12 years old and weighs about 200. Her brother says she doesn't like to spend the week ends away from home but finds she can jump her diet the more readily when no one is looking and therefore is willing to make the 200 mile round trip for the opportunity it affords to satisfy the inner man. From the Baton Rouge front it is reported that the Henrys in that quarter are delighted with the prettiness of their adopted child and grandchild but that the grandmother is distressed because she has discovered that one of the baby's ears is larger than the other. As someone has remarked before: everybody has his problems.

And now I must start folding up my beard, after knocking off a couple letters, splashing through a shower and having a quick go-round with Omar. May your week end be as quiet as Yucca flats while folks await favorable winds to sample their unholy wears.....

455

Sunday, February 20th, 1955.

*How nice to find your elegant letter of Tuesday in Saturday's post*

And how noble of you to have thought up means of enter-  
taining the R. E. A. gypsies. By now, and long since by the  
this memo has come to hand, you will have seen them and they  
will have gone. It was such a pity you have had to be strugg-  
ling with a cold. For that reason particularly, I trust the nerve  
strain about telephone calls is fortunately a thing of the pa-  
st. I think I should tell you that I have instructed that Marshal  
woman, -- for one never knows when she will or will not be in  
Manhattan or any place else, -- that never is a telephone to be  
employed. The fact that this has been well established in her  
mind may contribute a vast peace in other directions when eve-  
n and if ever, she should make her bow in the metropolitan area.

How characteristically thoughtful of you, too, in referring to the Brook Haven matter as a kindness to Madam Marco. I am under the impression she doesn't read any more but that is merely a guess on my part and as you have seen her correspondence and read it more closely than I, you would be the better judge as to the situation of her vision. Sometime, if you think of it, would you give me your opinion, too, as to whether Mrs. Brandon believes that the Jedediah Smith of Dale Morgan's pen is, indeed, of the Hatche family. My reader had considerable difficulty wading through the letter, --Mary Rhodes mentioned she had difficulty, too, and when my reader had finished the letter, after much stumbling around, it still wasn't clear in my mind if Miss Nellie did or did not think Jedediah of the same family that her mother-in-law belonged to. This point doesn't matter but if you should recall what impression she gave you, I should be glad to know how you interpreted it.

I'm so glad you told me of your enchantment in discovering the likeness of A. Dumas, pere, and girl friend.



6187

7214

February 20, 1955

And I'm so glad to know that a transcript may be made when one is needed. I should rather not have it at the moment, --I have so many treasures over which I have to say grace that I would feel more secure in knowing that it could be brought to hand directly at some subsequent moment when I envision an article on the mulatto matter in general, and with emphasis on local folk ways at which time it would be so convenient to drag in Europe's most popular novelist of the mid 1800's.

And may I thank you, too, for having so thoughtfully touched the particulars about Jules Lion... I am discovering that there are differences in the biographical data I have concerning said gentleman and I am sifting out some of these to discover a piece of information fits into my vague concept of the man's early activities. For example, one account mentions his pictures in the Paris Salon in the 1820's, another in the 1830's. Of course he may have shown in both decades but it strikes me that of the 1820's is more likely if that fits in with the date of his birth which I do not chance to have at the moment. One account indicates he came to New Orleans in 1839 whereas another dab of data states that he did every of the Louisiana State Legislature during the single summer of 1836. Obviously there's some twist in that set of facts. Then, too, one date of his disappearance is given as 1864 and another as 1865.. With these uncertainties in mind, I have written the Metropolitan Museum, Department of Painting, stating that I contemplate having photographs made of certain local paintings, including one of Lion, and asking them if they would care to have reproductions of these for their file at the same time, requesting that they give me what biographical particulars they have concerning Lion. If able to accredit certain dates to that institution, the proposed article might carry a measure more of authenticity, I should think. I suppose Bob Segelou and wife may turn up a few legal records their New Orleans research and this, plus the Metropolitan's answer, might provide sufficient framework for the piece now being stirred.

The enclosures speak for themselves. I find the Briarwood one a splendid example of the lady's ability to create some sort of an impression that is likely to lead the reader into confusion to begin with and into some false conclusions in or before the end, reminding us but I feel, of that letter and mis-information she conveyed to la Storm last Spring about the iris award in Lafayette.

6187

3. 7215

Lo! as I finished the fore-going page, a tap came at my door, --a participant in an infair going on at a home next to the former Hunter menage below the spillway, where the refreshments ran low and my caller was delegated to telephone a honkey-tonk for renewed supplies. Fortunately the gentleman is some sort of a mechanic and hence, while I made the telephone call, he worked on this new ribbon you had so thoughtfully prepared.

But to get on or back to Saturday's in-coming mail, although I should first say, perhaps, that Carolyn came about first dark on Saturday night and that Helen came tonight about dusk-dark. For Helen it had been a long drive over from Waco and so, after giving them a dab of supper, followed by a pleasant round of conversation, both ladies headed out for town where they will spend the night and depart for New Orleans at dawning. But to return to the correspondence, -- the letter from The Bluff for itself. It seemed to me to call for speedy action in order that I might transmit the invitation to Dora before he had quitted Gainesville.

I accordingly wrote Dora, copying the paragraphs pertinent to the matter so far as related to him. Then I wrote him a letter, admonishing him to telephone the Bluff directly from Gainesville, no from Charleston, to make whatever arrangements he cared to. In my letter to him, I also mentioned that this letter from la Storm and Kay was in response to a note I had written them last Sunday remarking that he and I had had a Friday sitting when he had stopped off here en route to Gainesville. Naturally, I tried to make it appear that my letter had been casual for I never want him to think that I had anything to do about engineering the Bluff matter, for it is better he should think it was merely a 1, 2, 3 matter.

Surely few people, having terminated their employment and without an notion of what might be next, if any, by way of a job, have been as lucky as to have such a situation served up so promptly on a silver platter. Naturally, I didn't say that, but rather that I knew he would love the flora and fauna along the Cooper and that it was so nice that he would have as a neighbor one Archibald Rutledge living upon the Santee, perhaps not more than 30 or 40 miles from The Bluff, and I tossed in Prince Alston and a few others just as a reminder of the nature of the region and its vogue attributes of precisely the things he likes most in this world.

.....you



7216

Recalling how Dora had jumped the gun on this departure from Norman, which he had said would be on the 12th, only to appear here on the 11th, I thought as quick transmission of this news as possible was of the utmost importance and so I gladly accepted Carolyn's offer to affix some extra postage to the envelope, she having some air mail stamps and things, and accordingly we drove into town early this morning to post the letter so it would get the early morning bus to the Alexandria air base and so whiz off in the direction of Florida where it should be delivered bright and early on Monday morning.

I am so anxious to save Dora what I know would be a terrible disappointment, were he to search for work in Dallas or Fort Worth. For he has never had any experience in business and is too sensitive a soul to buck the problems with any measure of satisfaction and any effort on his part to live on the income of a job which he could command, would be heart-break. Naturally one cannot tell him all this and he probably couldn't imagine it, if one were to do so. And so I am enchanted at this wonderful opportunity presented, enabling him to enjoy all the opulence of the lush South Carolina low country, surrounded by comfort and oozing with all the elements in life he likes best. I pray the Lord he may have the wisdom to grab at it, and even though he might not care to remain for very long, he would at least have the pleasure of a plantation existence in the Carolina low country under conditions not likely to be encountered often 100 years after the close of the ante-bellum era.

Before folding up my beard tonight, I had better drop Robina a line, casually reporting that Mrs. Storm has issued an invitation to Mr. Pipes, so that she may be vaguely prepared as against Dora's failure to return for his trunk in her attic. I hope that I could be wrong in foreseeing the possibility that even now Dora might have left Gainesville en route to Shreveport or Melrose, but I'm hoping I am wrong.

Returning to one point in your nice letter, may I say I had to laugh a little and at the same time look a little shame-faced at myself when I read your observations regarding middle age spread. My particular brand seems to be not so much a hip line as a bay window getting out of hand immediately in front of me. By curbing startches a bit, I am hoping to correct this deformity a little but by and large, if I may use a phrase so pat in such matters, I'm not much concerned over suet figures. There is something about the personality of the people whose primary purpose in life seems to be to starve themselves in order to maintain a certain thinness which, when they ultimately succeed across the fence, it turns out that in rounding up a thinness of figure they have only a perfect counter-part in thinness of mentality -- heart, to accompany it and as for myself, it is the expanding heart that is the matter of moment to me and hips and bay windows may fall where they may.....

7217

Monday, February 21st, 1955.

Memorandum: Thirty billion times would not begin to convey to you how deeply I appreciate your Registered Letter which came safely to hand in today's post.

How much like you, in the midst of so many things and so many demands on a half dozen fronts to have thus sent along this segment of yourself. And how characteristic of you that you should have recalled the folders, etc., mentioned so far back. I find myself thirty billion times more indebted, too, because of one or two little demands of the moment and up until today, my plans for executing one or another of the projects have been cramped by no perspective giving out on any of these potential prospects. But thanks to your magic, all the impasses have suddenly been eliminated and now I can go ahead with figuring out which may fall in most advantageously and how one sort or another of the things planned for printing so as to coincide or rather to dovetail with one or two little birthday items I have in mind for Arenbourg.

It is all so nice and is so timely that I cannot convey any but the vaguest impression to what in reality is the most understanding heart.

I shall be so interested to learn how the Verdi evening turned out and I am holding the thought against events that have already transpired that ever thing went along swimmingly except the weather by Opera, time was again without rain, I hope.

It was so kind of you to give me your impression of the Grandpe and Melrose cards which, I am glad to learn, are alright so far as the printing is concerned. I'm hoping the descendants of Grandpere may like his card. I sent one to la Vaccarini, thinking she might be tickled by it. I suppose I shall be hearing from here shortly regarding it.

Carolyn told me something yesterday that reminded me of some mention Robina made to a rose rock about which Dora had spoken to the latter about, and now I don't recall how Robina



7218

did describe it, and I'm not particularly interested, although I should have paid more attention, had I heard what Carolyn had to say before, or had I heard it before receiving Robina's letter. Carolyn said that Dora had spoken of me to her with much admiration and had illustrated his point by saying that in a certain section of Oklahoma are to be found either on the surface of the ground or just under it, some very interesting rock formations which after thousands of years of exposure to the effects of various elements, had finally emerged in the shape of a rose, --hence the name, rose rock, and somehow Dora tied in the formation of the objects with their durability which has finally come to light as having something to do with a parallel he had contrived in his own mind with his correspondent of the past dozen years. I found this example of his affection mildly surprising since, as you know, his reserve in expressing himself along personal lines is pronounced and almost seemingly casual.

I am so hopeful that he will recognize the potentials as are embraced in The Bluff invitation. A career of unique opportunities stretches slap ahead, I should think, and if he would only have the good luck to fall in love with Kay and marry her, that would be wonderful. It gives me so much pleasure to contemplate the security of just being on the Cooper would guarantee him in the years ahead, and if he might only have the good fortune to fall in love with Kay and marry her, his worldly worries would be forever taken care of and that would make me so happy in just knowing about it.

I was sorry to learn today that on Sunday James Aswell had a stroke and that Rosalind spent last night with him at the hospital in town. I know not if his condition is such that he will have to remain in the hospital long or not. I feel doubly sorry for poor Rosalind whose row seems to have been such a trying one to her during recent years and this misfortune will certainly not be likely to make it any easier sprinkled and down-poured here intermittently during the past 36 hours and several times I have had to dip buckets of water out of the big old sugar pot to keep it from running over and spilling the gold fish on the grass, alas, as Gertrude Stein might phrase it. We were lucky in having escaped the sleet storm which swept over Shreveport Sunday afternoon, I guess. Carmen telephoned me to say that during the Columbia broadcast of the New York Symphony yesterday after the Shreveport station kept cutting in to advise people as to which bridges not to use, as several of them were closed to traffic because the ice which made traveling on them impossible. The rain has stopped tonight but the sky remains overcast and the thermometer is at 34, but we have had no ice and things are supposed to start warming up tomorrow.

But cloudy skies have been unable to keep out the gleams of sunshine, thanks to the marvelous powers of the shafts of light stemming straight out of the heart of Lyme.....

7219

Tuesday, February 22nd, 1955.

Memorandum:

An examination of my head is certainly in order. This morning I rushed like mad to get out a quick letter of two, hoping to beat the 9 o'clock dead line of the passing postman. Well, I made it alright and the clerk remarked that the postman must have had an accident, he was so late. It wasn't until 10 o'clock that each of us recalled that on a national holiday, the postman doesn't make his rounds. No wonder I forgot February 12th was the birthday of A. Lincoln Esquire, for not even the U. S. mails remembered it either and made their rounds as usual.

After all the years I have lived in the South, I am still much in a fog when it comes to the observance or non-observance of national holidays. It is true that in town today, the banks are celebrating the founder's birthday by remaining closed. But all the stores, the Chamber of Commerce, etc., are all doing business at the usual stand. The school also are functioning as usual, and how much the celebration of the birthday of the Father of His Country is dished out to the students may be gathered from the fact that when two successive secretaries came by Yucca on their way home from school, I asked each of them if they knew what day it was. The first one said it is Tuesday, the other said it is Wednesday. They were about 15 minutes apart, so I could put the questions individually. I told each that the mails didn't run today because it is a national holiday. Each said, "Oh". When I asked the first one if he knew whose birthday it was, he pondered a moment, puzzled but completely, and then came up with shining face, exclaiming: "Yes, sir...it sure is...It's Mardi Gras birthday." The second one came up with something after much pondering. He demonstrated his historical knowledge was about on a par with mine, for after thinking about it for a moment, he declared: "It sure must be Abraham Lincoln's."

Gather we not only need bigger and better school houses, but a dab of more industrious teaching to boot.



CLSV

7220

And so, after be-rating my secretaries for not knowing it was Washington's birthday while both the clerk and I never be-stirred our own brains sufficiently to realize there would be no postal activity today, let me turn momentarily to Mardis Gras itself.

Locally the day, so far as costume wearing goes, seems to be centered pretty much among the Protestant negroes whereas Church going will be reserved almost exclusively for the mulatto Catholics on the morrow.

This afternoon I saw droves, --several dozen, children and grown women even grandmothers, rigged up in a vast assortment of costumes... For the most part, the younger girls affected or effected, and either verb or do, the costumes of boys while the young gentlemen be-got themselves into "ladies" clothing. The more mature women frequently rigged up get-ups su-witches, although one grandmother showed unusual imagination in both costume and make up. The clothing was pale-pale green of some flimsy stuff and her make up marvelous, using white for roue, both on cheeks and lips and something suggesting opening daffodil petals of heria size, golden in hue, of course, painted all around her throat, and wonderfully striking in contrast to her natural deep chocolate skin coloring. Her wig was of Spanish moss and fetchingly tied in little green and yellow bows.

At this point the telephone rang, --New Orleans calling. It has been raining there all day in contrast to our delightful sunshine at Melrose. Dorothy Pratt, who is leasing Carolyn the apartment, wants to drive up here tomorrow with Carolyn and Helen, --the two latter driving separate cars. They plan to leave New Orleans at 7 in the morning, arrive in Natchitoches at noon, come down here at 12:30, for la Pratt simply has to see an old plantation which she apparently never has, oddly enough as a holder of New Orleans apartment, and after arriving here at 12:30, a quick tour will be made and she will board the 2:20 train from Cypress, heading back for New Orleans, while Helen and Carolyn will drive on to Marshall to spend the night before Helen moves on to Waco. But that's for the morrow and I should like to touch on one more point about the local Mardis Gras, which is at all organized or in parade formation but merely is made up of random groups going up and down the roads and generally making merry. What seems to me beyond my understanding is the fact that at least three full grown negroes I know are always frightened to death of these costumed figures, all of whom are well known to the frightened ones. --Puny, for example at 56, beat a quick retreat, streaking through the Rand camp and on to his house where he bolted the door, after arming himself with his shot gun and wouldn't even let his wife Zelma, into the family dwelling until all the "Mardis Graser" is gone. Jack Marcell, a little older than Puny, perhaps 65, is a sort of witch doctor and perhaps for that very reason is actually scared pink of the costumed boys and girls.

Well, so much for a dull letter but I did want to let you know how this turned here on this Washington's - Mardis Gras' birthdays. And again may I say how happy your letter and all of yesterday makes me today.....

CLSV

7221

Wednesday, February 23rd, 1955.

Memorandum: Carmen telephoned me about 10:30 this morning to say that James Aswell had just died at the hospital.

She said Rosalind had come in to town to do a bit of shopping and had dropped in to the hospital to chat a little with her husband before running out home, --4 or 5 miles above town toward Grand Ecote, with a view of returning after dinner to spend the afternoon with him. When she entered the hospital, the doctor met her, asking her to hurry as the end was close at hand. He died within ten or fifteen minutes from the moment she reached him.

Her son, Melvin Douglas, Jr., was in the Army or Navy for a while after finishing his service, took up his residence in Denmark, --places, and nobody seems to know why although it is supposed he may be in business there.

One naturally regrets James' passing but his demands on Rosalind were such that she never could get around to practice of her own talents which, as an artist and as a concert pianist she was more gifted than he, I believe. It always seemed most regrettable that he discouraged her in her efforts to paint, write or play and he frowned on the idea of even having a piano in the house, --a great deprivation for anyone who loved music so much as Rosalind. He did his writing long hand and insisted that she do the typing of the manuscripts over and over and over. That, of course, took much time and probably as much or more was expended on her preparation of food that he would accept as to his liking. I remember on one when they were very short of money, she invested a little extra money she had made from something or other, by buying a fine steak which she thought he would enjoy. Her efforts to have it prepared right, however, came to naught when just before dinner he announced that he didn't feel like eating steak and insisted that it be disposed of. These little things must have been heart-break for a person so delicate of feeling as Rosalind but it is because of the circumstances that I am led to believe that after the initial shock of his death has passed, there is a pretty good chance that Rosalind may find re-adjustment comparatively easy and, of course I am hoping that because of her new freedom, she may recally come the delayed flowering, so long denied her by his whims.



1887

7222

On the home front, everything rocks along smoothly without the  
zest and variation of yesterday's Mardi Gras celeb tion.

The opportunity to contrast the rural observation of the  
contrast to the urban flub-dubbery, came when the three ladies  
arrived from the Crescent City at noon. Their impressions of  
the New Orleans doings stemmed in large part from the rain and  
which somehow didn't seem to dampen the crowd's gaiety but some-  
tended to cast a pall over the individual's enthusiasm in  
varying degrees.

They said that perhaps the most impressive sight so  
far as costuming was concerned, might be found in family  
groups, each member of which might appear, dressed in identical  
approximately the same general type of "get-up". As a case in  
point, they mentioned encountering what was apparently a  
single family of merry-makers, a father, mother, two teen age  
a 11 or 12 year old boy and a small baby. The entire  
family was clad in flimsy costumes, suggesting leopard skin,  
with masks suggesting the animal's head, and big papa papa and  
mama and straight on down to the little baby, all rigged up  
in the same sort of material.

The three ladies left about 2, Helen departing for  
Waco, Dorothy Pratt of the 524 address going to Natchitoches  
to have Carmen show her the town, and Carolyn going to confer  
some photographer in town about some technical matters. The  
work she had contracted for there had not been accomplished and  
she accordingly returned here this evening and made the most  
of the opportunity to take the Father and Son and the Grandpere  
and other pictures in full color, -- a tricky business for color  
films requiring among other things that day light be eliminated  
before the pastels, covered by glass, can be very successfully  
recorded in color.

It goes without saying, of course, that I lost  
all the Edward R. Murrow and like commentaries, to coin a  
word, on the news but I shall catch Mr. Agronsky on  
the morrow. I'm curious to hear if all the "cheating cheaters  
in reformed ex-Communists, will get the testimony around to  
little Miss Bentley and how much of a hubbub there will be  
at Grand Coueteau as a result of the next swing she may take aro  
the Washington investigation circle. And Mr. Aswelll was so  
much on her side. At least he now knows the answer which is m  
anyone on this side of Jordan seems to have been able to make  
minds about very conclusively. Must fold forthwith.....

7223

Thursday, February 24th, 1955.

Memorandum: How nice to find your elegant letter of Saturday  
in today's post and how kind of you to take time out to give  
me so many interesting particulars. It goes without saying that  
I am vastly indebted to you for acquainting me with the various  
recordings about which I shall make inquiry from time to time as to  
special subjects that may come to mind as possibilities. I seem  
to be running far behind in secretarial assistance at the moment  
and so I shall take up the matter of listings at a subsequent sitting  
I must congratulate you on your nobility in nurturing your  
sleeping companion at the Don Carlos and for your remarkably clever  
presentations of the situation, all of which made me laugh, so far  
as Sleeping Beauty is or was concerned. It was so good to know  
that you had an opportunity to chat a bit with J. H., for although  
he is the personification of success -- in breeze -- of the successful  
business man, he is at the same time possessed of some of the unique  
virtues of his mama, in some of which I think he excels and I have  
no doubt you had an opportunity to observe some of the cross sections  
of these which, I must say, do represent some unusual combinations.

It was so nice that your letter came today, for it gave me  
an opportunity to gain some notion as to how things turned in  
Manhattan last week before the travelers return on the morrow. I fou  
it interesting, too, that the enclosed card from la Montespan  
should also have arrived the day before they did. I scarcely need r  
in passing that my response to the March 11th invitation will be  
a "Thank you very much, --but No".

I'm so glad to know the Invitation to Learning program is  
still being published. As I recall, they combine about four months  
of programs in one issue. Somebody the other day referred to that pr  
as "The Hour of Silence, feeling quite sure that nobody on earth  
even listens to such a thing. Come to think of it, we do know quite  
a few people to whom such a program, were it the only one at a  
certain hour, would pass it up, since tomfoolery is the big product t  
appeals to so many.

Your mention of the Madison Avenue address of F. D. R. Junior, re  
to mind that those were the same digit, I think, which were in his mo  
address. Perhaps she sub-let to her offspring. I am using the  
Hyde Park address, feeling certain it will always be forwarded.



7224

Thursday, February 24th, 1955.

It was so kind of you to write as you did regarding Carolyn. I must say, however, in all truth that all my inspiration stems from Manhattan rather than Marshall, for while she is interested in the the I dig up and really wants to project them with pictures into print, he enthusiasms are so volitale that in my own determination to get some of the things into magazines, I find it imperative to bombard her with communications and to try keeping her thoughts concentrated on a single project. I must tell you quite frankly that I honestly belie the primary advantage of having the New Orleans apartment for all of u comes or will come, I hope, in large part, from the fact that she may passing this way occasionally on her way North and South. I think last weekend, for example, which was spent in the Crecent City, primarily for the purpose of doing something or other, was actually frittered away, as was bound to be the case, in other lines of endeavor which was the only thing to be expected when the whole town is rocking I think little save contacts. --supposing they can be afforded, can be expected from the Pirates Alley address. But perhaps she will get a to out-lying regions where she can find profitable employment. She thinks she is going to put together the Lion article while there, prio the African safari, which may or may not eventuate, --either the pieci together or the African thing. But her contacts with Holiday, Look, e are good and now that the portrait has been recorded in color, perhaps that job may be achieved. She left early this morning for Marshall and hopes to get in the air pictures of Sister Frances Jerome on her way t New Orleans about the middle of March, along about the time L. Stomr arrives in that place. Dependability, in my estimation, is one of the cardinal virtues and the absence of it somehow leaves one uninspired for undertaking, although there is always the chance that something may be achieved when or before the full swell of a momentary enthusiasm fa. I can't recall if I mentioned in my yesterday letter that several of t L. S. U. boys were arrested in the carnival excitement in New Orleans on Tuesday on the charge of failing to obey police orders to disband or move-on or some such. Two of these boys were Mildred Cunningham's twins, --Charles Cunningham's nephews, and Joe Regard, Ce. nephew was another. I understand the Judge turned out to be a friend of the Cunningham boys' papa and so a mere slap on the wrist was administered to all who were then turned out of the clutches of the la. If you should like to know anything about what the ladies at the Opera had on, how the flunces were arranged, the neck lines, etc., etc have no doubt I may well be able to tell all after the coffee hour on the morrow.....

to mind that these were the same girls I met at the opera. I am using the address. Perhaps she sub-let to her of-ficiating. I am using the Hyde Park address, feeling certain it will always be remembered.

7225

Friday, February 25th, 1955.

Memorandum: I have been thinking of you a great deal lately. I really think she is the sweetest person I ever knew in all my life.....so thoughtful on every imagineable point.....; I can't think of anyone I should so like to have come and stay for a rest in the country.....and it was so sweet of her to arrange for the Metropolitan.....I know I had never been there before.....and I'm going to get the Verdi book and read the story.....and seats were marvelous.....and she was so thoughtful as to give me an opportunity to see everything.....and the enctr'act was so pleasant such nice looking people.....and society in pretty clothes.....and you know, there was one dress.....etc., etc."

The travelers arrived in mid morning. Everyone or rather both I am glad to be back, --momentarily. They dined at the big house with Eugene and me and at 2 o'clock, Celeste was in the big road again, heading for mama at Mansura. The two ladies will return sometime tomorrow. The bus is in the big road, too, but I suppose he may return ere dawn.

The day is balmy and cloudy and after the Canadian snows, everyone on the party, I imagine, was glad to strike warmer climes although I have heard no direct reports from any of the others of the party as yet. In today's post came an envelope, bearing the cancellation stamp of Tampa, Florida, February 22nd. It contained the enclosed card and I assume Dora had left Gainesville before receiving the air mail, special delivery letter. I am not positive about this, however, in view of the reference to the Atlantic, which may or may not mean The Bluffs Plantation, I suppose. I assume, however, it does not. Naturally, I am holding the thought that the letter, if it did not reach him, may have caught up with him by now. Those words, "See you soon", suggest another surprise visit. It would be a great pity if he should come all the way over here, in ignorance of my message, which, had it been received in Gainesville, would have found him so close to South Carolina. With such meager information to hand, one can but live in suspended animation on this entire matter until further word to hand. They buried James Aswell at 11 this morning. I was prepared to my last respects but something went wrong with local arrangements. I had posted a letter to Rosalind so that she would receive it this evening. Early in the afternoon, one Jack Flores telephoned me on be



7226

of Rosalind, saying he had tried to get me yesterday to say Rosalind w  
like to have me as an honorary ball bearer. I thought it very kind o  
He said, in response to my inquiry, that Rosalind was but definitely g  
to continue making her home in Natchitoches Parish. James was buried  
the Memory Lawn cemetery they had developed a few months back.

I suppose it has been 12 or 14 years since I either saw or heard  
name mentioned. I may have told you on my only meeting. I was at the  
big house with the Madam. Lyle came over and said he had some friends  
.....he wanted me to meet. There was Jack, tall, tan and terrific, and  
what I took to be a little girl of 10 or 12 years. --Jack was standing  
by the fireplace, the little girl was sitting on the sofa. She was  
wearing a smart little Scotch plaid cape. Presentations were made. Th  
little girl remained seated and did not extend her hand. But shortly  
slipped off her patent leather slipper, grasped firmly a tall high  
ball glass I had not seen at her feet, and raising it with her toes an  
slipped it as non-chalantly as a bar maid. The girl, then actually  
about 40, I suppose, turned out to be Mary Belle De Vargas, and I neve  
that afternoon or anyone present.

But, returning to the initial notes made in this memo, I must  
toss in one other item that sounded the more hilarious to me the lo  
I pondered on the Shreveport arrival of the travelers this morning.  
It seems Sister was there full of much bounty, so far as J. H. was  
concerned, for, as you know, she hates Celeste. When the  
contact was made on the train's arrival, it seems that Sister elbowed  
Celeste out of the way to get to J. H., presenting him with a huge  
sort of square hatbox, and kissing him roundly and wishing him  
congratulations. He opened the box then and there to discover it  
contained a huge and very fancy birthday cake which Sister had baked  
with her own hands. J. H. asked what that was all about, and Sister  
said she had made it especially for him and that he must have forgotte  
that today is his birthday. Matter of fact J. H., undaunted by naught  
remarked that he certainly hadn't forgotten his birthday which is in t  
first week in October but that neither had he forgotten Celeste's whic  
was today. Imagine the embarrassment of the elbowing hoyden when  
she had to back up and summoning what nerve she could, presented her  
prized work of art to the proper party. "Don't you think that's  
a scream."

And then there was a white bull dog which had also been labeled  
as a birthday gift, to the wrong person, of course, and so the folks  
said goodbye and headed for home, arriving with a dog nobody wants  
and a cake that was pretty good, even though it had had to switch  
ownership so early in the morning. But I must break off, echoing as  
I do, all the things relative to Lyle as expressed in the first paragr

7227

Sunday, February 27th, 1955.

Memorandum:

It was Saturday morning in the office at the store. I  
was fiddling around in the stationary section. J. H. was si  
at his desk. He swung around in his chair and apropos  
of nothing, suddenly opined:

"You know, that sure is a nice lady....."--He only spe  
of Madam Regard in that fashion. "I was certainly glad to s  
Did Celeste tell you we had dinner.....She is so kind.....a  
obviously she has such a mind.....She and Celeste went out  
together.....I'm not much on Opera but I know ladies like su  
things.....it sure was nice of her to invite Celeste.....y  
reckon she'll make a rounds down here again....."

I reckoned she would.....

I mention the above because it is so unusual for J. H.  
ever recall anyone, and only up until then had I ever heard  
him refer to anybody as "a nice lady" except Madam Regard fo  
whom he has an especially soft place in his heart. So there  
you are.

Last night I finally finished Jacques Barzun's "God's  
and Mine" at 8:25 and was delighted I had concluded just bef  
Fadiman "Conversations" when on the air. You can well imagi  
my delight when, slap off the griddle, it was announced  
that one of Mr. Fadiman's guests for the evening was Jacques  
Barzun. I got but about half of the broadcast as I can find it only  
some Chicago station, which about half the time is blotted ou  
some old hillebilly barn dance music, --and that is what I s  
the sublime to the ridiculous. Perhaps I was prejudiced in  
of the author whose book I had just read but regardless of t  
I must say I think said author and Mr. Fadiman were by far t  
most interesting people on the program.

I just discovered I seem to have got off with a Denholme  
margin, for which I apologize. In Saturday's post came much second class mail and not  
scrap of 1st class. I had half hoped to hear from Dora or  
La Storm. Perhaps one or the other will write or will have  
so I may receive it on the morrow's go-round. I tell myself



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that perhaps the Tampa card from Dora was written and there because, perhaps, --and I hope, -- he may have driven over there the Washington's birthday week end with his hosts, planning to return to Gainesville before heading back this way and thereby found the one I had sent him.

The Bands came to see me this afternoon bringing me some kind of a fine dessert which I shall attack at the hour of Meet the Press

Dr. and was on a TV program earlier in the week, --a half hour cussion of the last 24 hours of the life of Abraham Lincoln's life. I wish I had known about it, as I should have liked to hear it.

Blythe said her grandson, --one of the Whitfield Jack boys is a freshman at Washington and Lee University and that they were as proud of him as grandparents are likely to be when they learn that the young man has won a fourty dollar prize for the best essay in some scholastic contest. .... was vaguely taken back when Blythe told me the title:

F..... M..... of Melrose Plantation.

Would you pardon me while I pause to stroke my long white beard

Dr. and Mrs. Tarleton of the local college called this morning to ask if they might bring a Dr. and Mrs. Williams of Rice Institute. They might. I gave them a quick round. They were impressed. Dr. Williams is what Joe Gilmore used to style a "book writer".

On the way to the gate, I walked with Mrs. Williams and Dr. Tarleton. The gate, Madam Tarleton said Dr. Williams, while liking the tour, wanted to use it as a book drop for an article on his host. If I had only known about the Jack child, I might have referred him to the Washington and Lee freshman for particulars.

Ruby Dunklemaun who heads some of the Art section of the local also passed this way this afternoon. She brought with her a lady of Emma Plantation down on Bayou Lafourche which still has its lovely cypress. You would have enjoyed being with us to join in talking plantation.

Madam Regard returned from Mansura with quite a cold but she is up, although moseying about very slowly. I went to call on her for a while this afternoon and enjoyed my little chat. She was alone, having gone to some meeting of the Catholic Daughters and a banquet in town. Around and around she goes, and where she comes out, nobody

It has been so nice chatting and being able to start this letter. I did.....

7229

Monday, February 28th, 1955.

Memorandum:

How nice to find yours of the 23rd in today's post.

It's so thoughtful of you to give me the several slants on certain radio programs recently coming to hand and I'm sure we are as in our thankfulness to the man who invented the ironing board, -- a marvelous household gadget which somehow manages to effect so many things for body and soul than the mere name suggests.

And how nice you ran across the quotation from Gray:

"Full many a gem of purest ray serene,  
The dark, unfathomed caves of ocean bear:  
Full many a flower has is born to blush unseen,  
And waste its sweetness on the desert air."

I have always loved the lines so much, I'm doubly enchanted to find them quoted by your own true hand. I haven't read the Elegy in 20 years, I suppose, and many of its quotations have blurred in my memory the passing of time. The opening stanza is so nice, depicting the shepherd wending his way homeward as departing day leaves the world to "arkness and to me". And I suppose the couplet is still somewhat quoted:

"Fast speeds the land, --  
To hastening ill a prey,  
Where wealth accumulates, --  
And men decay."

But undoubtedly the most quoted lines are those you quoted, and poems innumerable have been written, trying to prove that Gray was wrong in saying:

"Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,  
And waste its sweetness in the desert air."

That, of course, presents a subject one which opposite sides can taken and argued about from now until Doom's Day. I recall one that said that where ever a flower grows, although unseen by human eyes, it is be noticed by a bird whose song will lilt more gayly and the sound of



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joy of the bird seeing such a lovely flower will be carried by the wind to other birds and to people and so encircle and thereby make happier the heart of the entire world.

I have seen some lovely flowers, especially human ones, whose death it has seemed to me, would have been better, had they been left unseen by the outside world and so often I have seen love flowers, transplanted into more cultivated surroundings and their beauty has vanished wonderfully and depressingly. And yet some of the loveliest I have known were transported across the seas to produce endless glimpses of peace of Heaven for others whose eyes would never have otherwise been thus. How nice that you should have quoted these lines to give me pause to my blessings.

I don't seem to have much news to night. I did learn at supper that Pat is buying an airplane, a thing I have always wondered about and the reason why J. H. has never invested in one.

Tomorrow I'm going to town at 7:15 in the morning for no reason on earth. Yesterday, one of Celeste's friends telephoned her to say that Rosalind had asked that someone ask me to come to see her and to effect my transportation. Celeste said she would make an early appointment at the Beauty Parlor and would take me to Rosalind's and leave me for a couple of hours. That would be fine. And so Celeste made her appointment and I telephoned the Aswell residence, only to learn that was bothered by a temperature. That knocked out my plans but since Celeste made her appointment so early to suit me, I shall lie and say I have to attend to some things in town although I haven't the vaguest reason for doing so.....interruption.....and interruption.

As between this paragraph and the above, Marshall telephoned to say that the portraits in color, taken last week, had just been received from the processing plant in Dallas and that all are fine ..and another operation, I mean interruption, --somebody trying to get Celeste to get back to the portraits, it seems that while all were quite satisfactory, the Lion one is exceptionally fine. And that, of course, is good news. The Ford Foundation, Carolyn said, is offering five thousand bucks for a study of religious or racial TV scripts of merit and though Cane River was made for some such. I recommended the Lion article be first, after which Mr. Ford's foundation might be contacted.

The other call was from an intimate friend of Rosalind's, saying is better. She also said her son is married and is teaching mathematics in Copenhagen. How those elvin Dougleases do get round.....

7231

Tuesday, March 1st, 1955.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Friday letter, enclosing the clippings of those gone on before. I am touched by your prayer in behalf of friends of today's past. I am touched by your prayer in behalf of friends of those gone on before.

I found it especially interesting that although the metropolitan papers did not carry identical obituaries, in each instance they spelled Rosalind's last name as Hightower which, although it makes scant difference, is noticeable since actually her last name is spelled with an H, --Hightower.

I'm sorry the prospects didn't appear especially Spring-like at the time you took pen in hand. A billion times a day, now that it is upon us, --it was in the 80's both yesterday and today, I have found myself holding the thought that full summer may come ever so early to the greater New York area.

Celeste and I left for town before breakfast and were back home by mail time, -- about 9. I dropped in to see the lady doctor but was too early. Her secretary said she had been disappointed when I missed her the last time I dropped by her office.

Having nothing on my agenda but to kill time, since Rosalind was not to be called on, I did a bit of window shopping and stumbled over some sort of a rummage sale.

Eventually, I came out of the place, bearing, of all things, for modestly sized fish bowls. At five cents a piece, few things could be secured at such a figure that would provide a surprise for four of my friends. Back at Yucca, I went fishing in the big sugar pot and after placing some water hyacinth roots in each bowl and a couple of frisky gold fish in each, I proceeded to get rid of them. Little Miss Clemence got one, a younger brother of the boy who had once presented me with a frog for my pool, Andy got one and I sent one home by Zelman to surprise Puny tonight at the close of his day. Everybody seemed enchanted and nobody ever got more fun out of the expenditure of a nickel.



1837

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Wednesday, March 2nd, 1955.

And now, if you haven't already done so, would you might give a glance at the enclosure but don't try to picture what a feeling of futility I am experiencing as Dora moves further and further from the Atlantic Coast and the time grows shorter, if it hasn't already passed, when La Storm will be leaving The Bluff.

I shudder to think of the Melrose telephone bills, expended for naught, in my effort to give Dora the most splendid opportunity that is likely to ever come his way. The effort is more than worth while but the depression of lack of success is enervating. The enclosure, I believe, is dated the 25th. The cancellation date on the envelope is February 6th, which, I suppose, should actually be the 26th. I immediately wired the San Carlo Hotel in Pensicola but from the phrasing of Dora's letter, there's not telling where he might be although I hoped the Hotel might have some other forwarding address than Shreveport. How unfortunate that the Sunday air mail delivery didn't reach him on Monday and how doubly unfortunate his Gainesville hosts didn't try to catch up with him, for it must have come to hand within a few hours from the time he left them. Well, I'm not one to do much crying over spilled milk but I tend to hold breath, still hoping against hope that at least some of the milk, - fact all of it, may somehow be miraculously saved as Time's pitcher a little nearer the edge of the table from which momentarily it may be expected to topple and forever lost. The rose rock analogy is alright but the rock part of it had better be pretty hard not to crack under such pressure of futility as it is now being subjected to. My telephone call asked him to telephone me immediately on receipt, giving my full number, but not a tinkle has sounded from the 'phone.

I guess I had better roll up my sleeves and get an air mail of to The Bluff, explaining my position for I suppose the ladies there find it odd that they have heard nothing from Mr. Pipes, although in my Sunday letter to them, I did mention I had had a car from Tampa and that perhaps my air mail had not caught up with the man. But when I think of the air mail sitting in Shreveport General Delivery, I could just die and doubly so since Dora is steadily moving further away from the East Coast.

But after the mail has been taken care of, I can collapse in my arm chair and read about doings at 579 Fifth Avenue in the "Hellen Gould Was My Mother-in-Law" and that is amusing enough to clear away the day's pain in the neck.

A few of the more conservative Chinese magnolias, having escaped freeze, are putting out and mighty pretty they are too. And wouldn't Flower Show at Grand Central be getting under way shortly.....

1837

7233

Wednesday, March 2nd, 1955.

Memorandum: of the winter weather at The Bluff.

"Ten Days that Shook the World" is the movie title I find myself thinking about so often these days.

For no telephone call came through in response to my wire to Pensicola and no letter came to hand from Dora to indicate his whereabouts. I suppose a telephone call will be forth-coming from Hatchitoches when it does come through.

Oh, misere....and especially when one thinks how much could have been building at The Bluff these past days if only.....

Our summer weather continues with the thermometer in the mid 80's and much scurrying around on my part, slashing down banana plants which remained standing following the freeze but whose stalks were thoroughly burst by the Jack Frost visitation. From where I sit, it would appear we shall have a might scant crop, if any, this year, but I'm leaving a few of the larger stalks standing on the theory that one or the other of them may by some miracle or other have escaped, as was the case last year. But the major amount of the tonnage the rest of the stalks represent has been hauled out today and it has been interesting to see how the white-white bud at the center of the circle formed by the stalks (sometimes 5 or 6 inches in diameter, will start putting forth, like a white fountain pen standing vertically on a brown saucer, and pushing skyward within a matter of minutes from the time the frozen portion of the stalk above had been cut off. I hold the thought that this year's cold snaps are over but that is at best a guess, for we are bound to have some more chilly weather before March has played out, I suppose.

Early this morning I dug a dozen young oaks and marched up to Joe's favorite camp site where I planted them in accordance with his request of a few weeks back. Oaks have such long tap roots it is quite a job to extricate them from the ground, the root of a small oak, say a foot or two in height, sending down about 3 feet into the soil, and a dozen holes three feet deep to be dug to get



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March 3rd, 1955

out of the ground and another dozen holes of equal depth to get them planted really ought to do wonderful things for my expand waist line. Unfortunately it was equally excellent for the appetite.

Bids were let today for the macadam road from the Bermuda bridge southward, passed Arenbourg and in front of Melrose. It will end a few hundred feet on down the road beyond the end of the gardens. The initial survey called for the road to be macadamized all the way from Bermuda to Derry but the Hertzogs wouldn't give the right of way, --extra space on each side of the gravel road being required to meet specific for the black-topping of a State highway and as condemnation proceedings did not seem worth while, and as nobody of influence the Cohens would be effects, their plantation being between Mel and Magnolia, nothing was done to push the thing, and the Cohens have little or no political influence. This acceptance of the road, --it was initiated by J. H. and the refusal of the Hertzogs to permit land from Magnolia to be used in the widening of the road, is rather typical of the difference between the Melrose attitude and the Magnolia. A tually the survey calls for the new road to cut through about two or three feet of the old store and the pushing back of the fence well within the present limitations of the garden, just as there would have specifications for a shaving of the Magnolia store and fence line. But because J. H. is the type of person he is, he will probably have no difficulty at all in persuading the road contractors that there isn't any need really in shaving off the front of the old store, and the net result will be that Melrose will get the benefit of the new road and lose none of his road frontage which Magnolia, sticking to the last letter of the law, will have its fences and store right where they are and no new road.

Old Age Pension checks came today. The clerk was speculating on how Clemence makes it. She had already borrowed \$49.50 on her check of \$55.00, leaving comparatively little cash for the next. But Clemence has slipped through tighter squeezes and what's more always seems to be having a wonderful time.....

7235

Thursday, March 3rd, 1955.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Sunday note with all the invaluable enclosures in today's post.

I cannot tell you how astonished I am at all the particulars you were able to uncover, and I shudder at the thought of the mountain of labor all this required. With all sincerity, I call you blessed at the same time, I pray you not to put yourself through in such a manner again. No article on earth is worth your good health and when you are under such day-to-day pressure, coming with the normal routine I urge you to do everything you can by way of relaxation to save you from all other labors than the absolute "musts".

The new light thrown on the career of Lion is so important, --the fact that there doesn't seem to be any record of his birth or where that transpired, either in Europe or America. Somehow this balance, so nicely with the fact that he didn't die but merely vanish. And isn't it wonderful that we discovered he did a likeness of good James J. Audubon, a name we must toss into the article if for no other than the fact that it will be familiar to most if not all readers. Doubt if any other Americans ever exhibited in the Paris Salon of the first quarter of the 19th century, assuming Lion to have been an American and because of the distinguished names of his sitters of the European gentry, it would seem that if Lion was American, he must have had so splendid patrons in Europe or was making along nobly under his own steam.

I think your suggestion that we explore data in the Howard-Tild Library most excellent. I shall pass along these clues to Patty so she may be guided accordingly when she begins digging in the archive of the Crescent City. The fruits of your labors have done so much to inspire me to greater zeal in the pursuit of additional information and at the same time, I feel the greater impulse to go ahead with the speculation as to how the local portrait came to be painted and a killing effect it had on the artist and how, as I shall surmise, it may have been one of the most controversial pictures of the Old South and of 18th century America. It seems to me so odd that the Metropoli is so leisurely in making its response to my letter, for while it may require a little time to collect certain data, they might at least have said Thank You, Yes, or Thank You, No, to my offer to send them likeness of the portrait for their files.

Two other letters in today's post speak for themselves. From the Shreveport one, we learn that my air mail - Special Delivery to Dora at Gainesville is sitting in Shreveport at Robina's. From Dora's letter a gleam of hope arises, what with a Florida address which may be of



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help in establishing contact. By a lucky break, I got today's post read, contrary to custom, about 10 this morning. I immediately sent a telegram to the address provided, reading "Telephone me immediately at Natchitoches 7 - 8043. It is now nearly 12 hours later, and although the Western Union assured me de of the telegram would be made within the hour, I haven't heard a pe And the clock keeps ticking and I know not when The Bluff Plantatio plan taking off for their westward jaunt. I have heard of people being in a tizzy. I now know what is meant, after 10 days of this sort of business.

The day was pleasant for the gathering of the 300 at Beaufort. A couple of South Louisiana groups stopped off to see me on their w the road. I placed a gardner at my telephone, instructing him to shout loud and come a-jumpin', if my telephone rang while I went to the front gate. There was not shoutin', no jumpin', in fact no rin Ethel Holoman, representing the Alexandria Town Talk, stopped off h at 5:15, on her way back home. The supper bell had just rung and I ushered her out without too much ceremony and I shook my head negat when another posse made their bow just after supper, as I did not u to miss the Pensacola call which never came through. At least I saved a dab of sole leather but wore out the seat of my pants, ho (hoovering) about my desk. I suppose the love for one's offspring inclined to increase in proportion to the amount which the child pu the parent through. By this late day and hour, Dora is fast emergi as one of my favorites.

I don't mind telling you that between this paragraph and the above, I have spent a quiet moment in the little Chapel. Somehow it seems as though one is perpetually asking God for so much when so often gratitude might so much better be the theme. All of which, as you have already supposed, is but a prelude to say that as I tapped the period on the foregoing paragraph, the telephone rang and it was Pensacola calling. The connection was po on this end but Dora could hear me distinctly. I talked fast, inte only now and then to ask if he could still hear me. He could. He thought the message was wonderful. I recommended that he consult a lines or other mean of travel at once and then telephone The Bluff He said he would and I wished him good luck and Goodbye. Frankly I feel as though the weight of the Universe had fallen from my shou

And now comes the hour for folding one's beard. My sleep will so pleasant, what with Dora taken care of and no end of pieces for Lion puzzle to be fitted together in my mind as I praise God for the peace from the Southern Atlantic section and the radiance of lo and inspiration from the direction of Lyme.....

From Dora - I am writing to you from the Southern Atlantic section and the radiance of lo and inspiration from the direction of Lyme.....

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7237

Friday, March 4th, 1955.

Memorandum: How nice to find your Monday letter in today's post. There were two or three others, - Kay, Carolyn and so on. But a basket ball tournament at St. Mathews threw the secretariat into a shambles and a I had an opportunity to read but one item, I put the others aside and shall take them up on the morrow.

In response to your question regarding pomegranates (pomegranates however it is spelled, yes, they grow very well in Louisiana, both flowering kind and the type producing fruit. The bush is inclined to a bit scraggly and attains a height of about 10 feet. There are plen of the flowering kind about but at the moment I do not chance to have one of the fruit producing varieties. I have written to a couple of nurseries but they have responded in the negative. I have sent out another batch of inquiries. There was a beautiful one in Madame Aubi Rockque's garden that brought forth fruit as large as grapefruit but gardens were ploughed up after her death and I did not know about thi until after the pomegranate had long since gone to kingdom come. Whe the intense heat of September splits them open, these great apples ar really beautiful to see, for the seeds are a marvelous scarlet and they sometimes stain the pulp of the fruit with their splendid color. Many of the white flowering bushes line the white garden and there are one or two in front of Yucca. They put forth their blossoms alon in late April or early May but the glory of the fruit bearing ones comes in the autumn and make such pretty no es of color in a tray of quinze, persimmon, gourd, etc.

And may I thank you for your kindness in acquainting me with wha Hellie had to say about Jedidiah Strong Smith. I am not going to use that gentleman in anything I do and so you might skip research on him. But I am glad you found out what you did about him. It is so o that from Dale Morgan's volume, one would never know that there was a connection between his Jedidiah Smith and the Natchez Second Creek family, and all references to the Morgan Jedidiah as regards the family, spea of them as living either in St. Louis or in Illinois, although the earlier chapters speak of Bainbridge, New York, the Susquehanna Vall on. Either this is a different family, for Mr. Morgan has certainly done a piece of historical work and for the life of me, I can t find it. I'm so glad you referred to Mrs. Sterling's clipping which, I mu confess, I never did get around to read and now I am sorry I did not, for it was a very good one.



7238

1955, March 6th, Sunday

had to do with the gentleman who interested me so much in the copy of you so thoughtfully sent me. This was the 18th century sculptor who was in Hatchitoches and I wanted to know so much more about him, and turns out that the clipping covered this matter, I didn't realize you on the subject of so much interest to me. I pray you to keep the clipping and if, at some future date, I want to refer to the matter, I shall inquire about it at that time.

I am curious to know what, if anything, Kay says in her letter about the proposed date of their departure from The Bluff for New Orleans. I am hoping they may be running much behind schedule, as seems to have been true in the past, for this would mean that Dora could have made contact with them by telephone last night. I asked him to send me a wire, let me know about what success attended his telephone call in order that I might arrange for his and their orbits to cross, should they have left South Carolina, in hopes that, failing a juncture on the Cooper, they might bump into each other in the Crescent City or some such. Perhaps Dora did wire and Western Union sent it by mail to me, if he not put down my telephone number. Perhaps, on the other hand, he decided to wait until he had had a look at The Bluff before wiring. But all these points are minor and give me no cause for uneasiness. I have done what I could and when that has been accomplished, the peace of mind that results is truly wonderful.

Our 80 degree heat continues, --for the moment at least, and appears to be doing all sorts of tricks. A case in point are the willows which are everywhere else in the country, I suppose, are about the first to put out their Spring greenery. But locally, they haven't budged an inch although the pear trees are in full leaf and the Chinese magnolia whose blossoms were "cooked" by Jack Frost, are also redolent with the fragrance of greenery. The lady who was here with Ruby Dunklemaun last Sunday, --a lady coming from Emma Plantation on Bayou Lafource, which is always two weeks ahead of Cane River in vegetation, told me the ribbon grass Gardener's Garter, has not sent its foamy whiteness above ground as yet whereas up here in the far North, the milk white shoots are already an inch or two above ground. It's all very curious.

And may I thank you for running through Robina's remarks regarding the rose rock business. It appears to be another example of the utter of one individual to grasp the feelings, impulses and thoughts of another. How well do I recall her puzzlement over what in the world it could be that I could see in the Hatchet traces, not one element of which seemed anything more than casual to her. I so much admire anyone with both feet on the ground but feel sorry for those who never get their heads in the clouds.....

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7239

Sunday, March 6th, 1955.

Memorandum: I cannot tell you how often I thought of you this afternoon the Philharmonic Concert over CBS, and particularly during that marvelous rendition by some German pianist whose name I didn't catch while rendering the piano concerto of mein lieber Wolfgang. The reception here was good and in spite of the rain in Manhattan all that that implies as of the Sabbath, I held to the thought that Luck might be lettering at Lyme. Frankly, I got nothing out of the final item on the number but that may have been due in part to a couple of interruptions.

Well, I finally got around to read the letters from The Bluff and Old Ponita, both of which I enclose or under separate cover. I was particularly enchanted with one line in The Bluff communication which, of course, was penned a day or two before contact had been established with Dora. I refer to the words, --and I can quote them precisely, having to do with the lady having understood that my friend was a poet and scholar and that Kay had been putting out feelers for a man with just that temperament for The Bluff. Little did she suspect when she penned those lines that I should be so delighted by them for on the face of them, they demonstrate that The Bluff was already in the market for just the kind of merchant I had to offer and there is always a feeling of satisfaction on anyone's part to be able to supply desired merchandise, --assuming that I have so done. In my swift sketch of things on the Pensacola wire to Dorq the other night, I may have talked so fast that he simply didn't remember all the points covered. One of these was my request that he send me a wire after trying to get through a call to The Bluff, thereby giving me some notion as to whether the ladies were still there or not and where his next address, if any, might be so that in case I needed to communicate with him promptly I could do so. But no wire came through either Friday or Saturday.



7240

Monday, March 7th, 1955.

perhaps there may be an air mail along about tomorrow or the next or giving me some hint as to what transpired, -- I hope.

Saturday was just another summer's day with the thermometer in the 80's. At noon the weather bureau reported the on-coming cold mass had passed over Fort Worth at 10:30 on Saturday morning and was expected to swell over Alexandria by 6 p.m. But somewhere the thing got stalled for a little while and so did not reach Melrose until 6 this morning, which was soon enough. But whenever those cold fronts get stalled somewhere along their route, they never regain their former intensity and so, instead of the thermometer drop to 30 as predicted, it slid only to 48 and warming is promised for the morrow. A pin point mist that provided no water to speak of, hung in the air all day, with sunshine trying to penetrate the thing cloud coverage without much success. But the sudden cool plus the seeming dampness successfully discouraged pilgrims, giving me an opportunity to hear much more of the Philharmonic than is usually my good luck.

I did bend an ear last night, trying to get something out of Mr. Fadiman's "Conversation" but either because of the poor reception, or I can get it but faintly out of Chicago, -- or perhaps in part because his companions for the evening didn't seem to shine in verbal exchanges, I didn't get much out of the program, either by way of entertainment or knowledge.

I thought you might find little to look at in the attached clipping of Bootsie Gay, Bobb Tallant, et al. Did I mention that Madam Millsbaugh who originally introduced Bootsie to this benighted part of the river, telephoned me the other day, saying that Bootsie had in mind to have some of Clemente's canvases and would I mind writing a little story, primarily as related by the artist concerning each and send the whole thing to Bootsie so she might use same for some publicity she had in mind, -- for the benefit of The Court Yard Candle, I suppose. In view of the business relations between Millsbaugh and Melrose, it didn't seem wise to recommend that Bootsie go fly her kite. Accordingly I told the truth by saying that somebody else had already spoken for some Hunter canvases for New Orleans and that I would have to consult said person who of course had the claim of priority. I wrote the same to Bootsie and, I hope, that is the last we shall ever hear of this March has its beginning, a month that I always liked with its promise of Spring at the beginning and at its close its blessed day of anniversary.....

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Monday, March 7th, 1955.

Memorandum:

One thing about plantation operations at this season of the year is the fact that one never knows if one is going to get no help or if one is to be engulfed by it. Along about now this situation is particularly noticeable because J. H. finds himself without anything he wants his labor to undertake and the labor must eat and therefore he bounces them in my direction, not so much with a view to wanting them to labor in the gardens but primarily because he doesn't want to be bothered with them.

And so this morning when I was expecting no help, I was bounced a half dozen people which was pleasantly startling for me. They did not present any puzzle, however, so far as finding them for them to do.

There were big, 30 year old Chinese magnolias to be moved, from the section of the gardens along the road, but far down from the gate where on one carefree March, Miss Cammie had stuck newly acquired little trees in the ground with endless abandon so that now there are plenty of full grown one, three or four feet apart, their branches and their roots all so entangled that none of them can do much.

I accordingly set some men to work making big trenches around some of these and other workmen digging big holes in which they might be transplanted, -- the magnolias, not the men.

Then a couple of the window frames in the dormers of the big house had to be replaced and window light put in. I set a couple of carpenters to work on them. A young tornado a month or so back had lifted several windows from the bindery and from the fan light in the Studio. These could be replaced, too, and then there was the precarious condition of the brick first story of the African House which the dirt daubers had just about shot through with whole sections where, grain by grain, they had actually succeeded in removing dozens of bricks. Gentlemen gifted in the art of mixing cement and filling in the chinks could be set to work on that. And then there were crepe myrtles which had grown into the electric wires which had to be transplanted or trimmed and so by 6:45 I had people scurrying all over the place and because of fairly close supervision, most of the day's undertakings were accomplished before first dark tonight.



1157

7242

Monday, March 7th, 1955

I am hoping to get the lower part of the story of the African House painted within a few days. I'm sorry that this is necessary, both inside and out but only a heavy coating of paint is going to prevent the dirt daubers from walking off with all the bircks not covered by cement and so I accept the paint with good grace although I regret the lovely but vanishing bircks and their colorings must be eliminated.

And what with extra assistance, I turned Yucca upside down, moved out all the furniture and having the walls washed down with soap and then re-washed with warm water. The lower draperies all went to the laundry and thus, within a few days I shall have the satisfaction of knowing I am enjoying the luxuries of the results of Spring cleaning even though I, personally, shall note very little difference in the appearance of things.

And then there were pilgrims, - Emporia, Kansas to the tune of five or six, and as they remarked they were going to Lafayette, I recommended the Jeanmard establishment, as they were quite civilized people.

And then there were a couple of Methodist preachers and a couple of Presbyterian clergymen and a flock of biddies from Texas, and I'm not sure how I fitted them all in to the general scheme but somehow they did so fit, and tonight I shall do mighty little reading, first because I shall be sleepy and secondly because I haven't anything to read.

I didn't even have to bother with secretaries today, for oddly enough there wasn't any first class mail. I thought I might receive a card from Pensacola or Moncks Corner or both, as a result of last Thursday's doings, but that will be reported subsequently in the week, I expect.

Life Magazine came to hand and I notice a likeness of Buddha on the cover so I take it that brand of religion must be included in this past week's copy and I am looking forward to exploring it.

A kitchen utensil with a copper bottom is being ordered today, mid March delivery at this bend of the river with a view of re-shipping some sometime prior to natal day. I was wondering if I should mention this with a view to some remark being dropped casually on the family hearth that somebody at the office or some such might be contemplating such an item as the festive day approaches, as a plain alibi. This, of course, is merely a idea which might or might not be practicable to be acted upon and Miss Lee will know be

1157

7243

Tuesday, March 8th, 1955.

Memorandum: I had a very good night's sleep and I feel much better today. I am hoping to get the lower part of the story of the African House painted within a few days. I'm sorry that this is necessary, both inside and out but only a heavy coating of paint is going to prevent the dirt daubers from walking off with all the bircks not covered by cement and so I accept the paint with good grace although I regret the lovely but vanishing bircks and their colorings must be eliminated.

Pure niggers are so wonderful I could just flatten out on the floor and roll from boudoir to living room and back again in hilarity.

But before going into that, perhaps I should explain that my state of mind is perhaps one of tiredness and perhaps that's what makes for laughter on my part since I'm too tired to bother about throwing a fit.

The day has been lovely atmospherically, with summer back again and the weather bureau predicting duplicate days through next Sunday at least.

My telephone was jingling early this morning, some calls for me, some not, as the wires seemed to be hopelessly tangled. Eventually I received a few calls for me, and I needed none of them. First Dr. Jones, an old friend of Miss Cammie's, telephoned me from Alexandria, asking if they might come at 2 with some North Carolina friends. Hey might. Then La Montespan telephoned to say she was bringing some gentleman from Cuba whom she and the master had met while in the island some time or they were to come at 4.

Then Rosalind telephoned to ask me for dinner to night. declined. Then some professor at the college called to ask if he might come with some of his students today. He might not.

And in between times, I was as busy as a hen a-settin', jumping from labor group to labor group and praying the Lord nobody would show up.

I had envisioned making a little triangular vegetable bed, just between the Yucca gate by the African House side and the boudoir. It became dreadfully apparent that I should never get to this and so I took one of the negroes, known for the fine vegetables he raises, and set him to work spading up the lawn, marking out the triangle I had in mind. I explained that I thought the border would be pretty all around with lettuce. I gave him



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an ocean of lettuce seed. Then I explained that I thought the tops of beets would look nice in a triangle running along just inside the lettuce. He thought that would be pretty, too. Then inside those two borders, I thought another triangle of carrots would look pretty and he thought so, too. Then I thought another row of beets would look pretty inside the carrot triangle and then another triangle of carrots and so on until we reached the smallest center triangle where we would put the final one of lettuce.

White folks can think up such strange things, something to he didn't quite comprehend and so, in spite of the rush I was in I hunched up more stakes and string, and with his help, marked off the outer triangle, then six inches inside, a second triangle, then another inside that and so on. At last he saw the light, it was just as well, for unexpected guests had arrived and I had to leave.

By this time it was one o'clock and J. H. was bringing me important people, --I know not to whom they were important, but they were friends of Martha Robinson and were out of New Orleans and so my afternoon began. The New Orleans gentlemen were enclined with what they had to see and threatened to bring their wives of the 27th. Dr. Jones and his party arrived in this midst of the New Orleans tour. I parked the Jones contingent in the library finished off the one-go-round and then took up the Alexandria go. As they left, the Cuban number arrived and liked things so much tens to return on the morrow with his same companion. It's all very strange. Secretaries were arriving and departing, getting nowhere. Jack Flores arrived just as the supper bell was striking. He had come to pick me up for the dinner party I had already decided I parked him in the living room and dahsed off to see the result of my Persian carpet in vegetables. Murphy had finished with his planting and was mighty proud of the results. So was I --not. He had removed all the strings marking the inner triangles and only the outer one, and using siad string as his starting point had planted little tiny rows of alternating vegetables running right angles to the sides of the triangle, all of the billions of little short rows all meeting in the center of the big triangle making a pure mess of the thing. I shall certainly have one oration to which I can point with amusement as the hodge-podge begins to sprout.

I returned to Mr. Flores, gave him a drink and sent him on his way back to town alone. There was a little mail but nothing from South Carolina and besides, no secretaries to read what was and tonight I shall sleep without the slightest difficulty, I feel

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Wednesday, March 9th, 1955.

Memorandum: May I invite your attention to the enclosure.....

Alright, now that you have read it, will you be inclined to agree with me that it shows in a way what can happen when one puts on his crown and reigns as King of the Mardi Gras in Washington or doesn't it. I'm not quite sure, although there isn't the slightest doubt in my mind that I am tremendously grateful to the Chalkleys for having taken up this matter while they were in the Capitol.

But I am recalling the Patterson letter to John Hall Jacobs and to me which didn't sound much like signifying approval of any further Proust recordings. As I recall that was perhaps in July, August or September. Would it seem possible that October should bring such a right-about-face. Hardly. And then too, it seems to me exceedingly odd that a Government letter addressed to me in October should have failed to arrive. Letters do go astray as we both know to our sorrow but it seems remarkably odd that that particular one, conveying the news of the matter which had interested me so long, should have miscarried.

And so I am writing three or four letters tonight to various people, --the Chalkleys and T. Ashton Thompson to thank them for their good offices, to Mrs. Bellonbacher to request a confirmation or a transcript of her letter of October, confirming the good news, and to the American Foundation for the Blind, asking the status of the new Proust recordings, if they went into production in October, the identity of the reader, when they may be calculated to circulate, etc., etc.

Frankly, I doubt very much if anything has really been done October or any subsequent month but it appears, as I had hoped when writing John Hall Jacobs, that eventually some political pressure might be used to advantage where just plain honest effort failed. And while nothing has been proven up to now, still, the fact that la Bellonbacher assured the politician that things were actually cooking would suggest that at least a smudge pot has been recognized, and since none of the agencies like to tangle unnecessarily with Congress which makes their appropriations, there will perhaps



7246

Wednesday, Oct. 24, 1955.

something come of all this, but obviously, unless the October time th  
is correct, the push ng will have to be done by some member or member  
Congress. Harry halkey, of course, is important in tide land  
oil, rice, etc., in Louisiana and I suppose his contributions to camp  
including that on Presidential level, is impressive and that a halke  
request to a Louisiana politician goes a long ways.

Well, so much for that delight.

After yesterday's bog-down with pilgrims, there were none today, I am glad to report. That gave me an opportunity to give attention to the African House which was a job. But before day was done, the last cement had been filled into the spaces where bricks had been removed by the dirt daubers, and both inside and outside the lower story were painted with two coats of something or other resembling paint, the paraphernalia inside the place cleaned and the two armoirs, desk, wash pot, loom cotton bail or bale and the Lord knows what all, put back into their respective places and I'm glad that job is done and the African House saves a while longer for posterity.

the weather remains warm and cloudy with once in a while a pin point sprinkle, but not enough to count. I was so filled with merriment over the strange planting of the triangular plot yesterday and so equally filled with mirth this morning when I took a second look at it that I decided that I would demonstrate better sense if I would plant my own fancy vegetable gardens if I really wanted them the way I wanted them. And so I spaded a balancing plot on the opposite side of the path, leading from the Yucca gallery to the gate, reversing the general triangular shape of the plot to that of the one on the west side of the path, --yesterday's, which has its point toward the gallery, would be nicely matched by the one to the east of the path, the latter's point stretching in the direction of the gate. And thus, and at long last, the beets and carrots and lettuce and radishes found themselves in a somewhat more orderly bed and only time will tell, - a couple of week's time, which one is going to satisfy my esthetic sense the more, although there was no doubt after last evening's glance at the first one that it will occupy first place in the realm of merriment.

Yesterday Dr. Jones told me he had telephoned Blythe to get my telephone number and that she had told him to tell me that she was "studying about" getting up this way on Thursday. So be it. But now I must knock off some mail and thence to my downy couch. And may your day chalk up as much satisfaction as the local one.....

7247

Thursday, March 10th, 1955.

**Memorandum:**

I started to say again tonight as I have probably been saying every night this week that I am weary with too much carryings-on. But that would be like my millionaire friends confiding their money problem in me, for I, as an expert in money matters probably rank along about even with you in the line of exhaustion so that the mention of weariness would only bring to mind the printing on the reverse of the card:

"Go to Hell. I have troubles of my own."

I suppose about 90 per cent of my lack of energy is due to the 90 degree weather we are having. The Shreveport Weather Bureau reported a high of 85 up yonder at 5 p.m., and it had been 90 here all afternoon. Spring fever is what we used to call it, if I remember correctly, and to this affliction I must add a touch of pilgrim fever, --Illinois, Arkansas, Massachusetts, Tennessee and California with a dab of Alexandria tossed in for good measure, what with Blythe bringing a flock of ladies, including Mathalie Scott for a couple of hours during the afternoon, not to mention a batch of people after supper.

And then, too, keeping the record strictly correct, I suppose I wasn't pepped up much by Dora's letter from Pensacola Beach. For I suppose depression is as enervating as the fatigue which is said to induce it sometimes. But at long last I have found out how one feels when one sees another wilfully take a left turn when the right one, clearly marked, has been rejected. My theology would get gummed up soon enough if I considered God's reaction to the decisions of human beings, for God, I suppose, can perceive well envision the end of each individual's road and the prospect of witnessing the decisions made must weigh pretty heavily on his heart.

The real gleam of sunshine for my day, however, is your week end giving me your sympathetic understanding of my "tizzy" of the past couple of weeks while trying to catch up with Dora in order to pass along the good news. It is so good to toss aside the world for a little while and to commune with you during such busy times. How n



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of you to have squeezed out time for a little chat when your own week was such a shambles and your week was fraught with so many business outside demands. But every word meant so much to me that I cannot tell you how much I treasure each and the impulse impelling you to write them.

Yes, I remember mention of the lady whom you entertained and I'm sure the little one arriving with L. J.'s group must have been the center of the festivities. I suppose it is the impending summer that will be the big test so far as the health of the little one is concerned if she can just make the first year and especially the summer heat, it will be promising enough. It is so good that the mechanical age has so many advantages for everyone but most especially for such little ones for the terrors of a torrid summer in a crowded city must be pretty well eliminated by now for the tiny tots, what with all the gadgets that technology as contrived by way of electric fans, cooling system.

And as things turned out at this bend of the river, perhaps it is well that you were saved from digging on my behalf on the week end what with all the hurly-burly that characterized this week for me. Perhaps we shall both get a breathing spell one of these week ends in Spring, and if you do, I trust you will devote most of your time to greenery in the park which you really should do, what with being all the time within four walls. At the present moment, I haven't much energy when day is done to devote myself to writing but when the current Pilgrimage rush eases off, I think I shall be able to get on the ball with gusto.

I shall try to send several letters herewith or under separate cover. You will be as touched by what Bob has to say about having a baby as I think Bob is a swell number and I shall be holding the thought that he and Patty may be more richly blessed in their second attempt at an offspring.

I was delighted to find three books from the New Orleans Public in the post this morning, for I have been without literary effort from the Crescent City for some days. Here was but one drawback in the coming to hand, -- I had read all of them, -- The Chinese Tangle, etc. recent months. But perhaps this is just as well, too, for I have seen during waking hours for such delights and I do have my little Persian to retire to on disk, just before folding up my beard and somehow the little number at the present moment doubly delights my soul, and no least because of the association that speaks to me with each line...

7249

Friday, March 11th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Our unique summer days continue, -- 92 this afternoon, with brisk breezes that dry things tremendously and remind one that the skies, although cloudless, are more of a gray blue than blue, -- dust storms or the results thereof from Colorado and the Texas panhandle, I suppose.

I think I probably owe some expression of regret to you for the dull note on which I strummed my typewriter last night. The minor key didn't really reflect my day's frame of mind but merely showed up a momentary weariness. I am ashamed of myself for not having taken a cat nap before knocking out such an inconsiderate memo. After a good night's sleep, I awoke as fresh as a daisy and because of freedom from pilgrims, in spite of the fine weather, I was able to concentrate much on gardening to the extent, at least of keeping lines of hoses running every old which way in the garden.

And that brings to mind an answer to your recent query regarding Joe. No, I think his request for planting his home site doesn't mean he is planning on any change from his present connections. I think he thought of Louisiana as the snow banks piled up in the Dakotas and gave some thought to his later years when he shall have retired. Heaven knows we all hold the thought that may be never so far in the distant future.

Mrs. John Kyser and Rosalind came to see me this afternoon. We sat on the back gallery and had an altogether pleasant, and quite humorous chat. Something happened that never happened before during the sitting when a drunken mulatto appeared and asked for a drink. It was Temite Moran who is quite out of mind when intoxicated but it was impossible to imagine him doing such a thing. I barked at him and he vanished.

I thought Rosalind looked too thin and, although gay, quite definitely on the high strung side. But a glass of wine and a dash of conversation and she appeared more relaxed. Thelma Kyser and I took a little turn in the garden for a quarter of an hour when Rosalind said she would so much like to spend a few minutes alone in the little Chapel. On leaving, her remark that she felt so rested seemed confirmed by her general manner. I'm so glad she passed this way and I'm hoping she will make it back after she returns from a visit to Georgia. She plans to finish a book on which James had begun and outlined a couple of others she wants to do. I think all these plans are so good for her so soon after her loss.



7250

Friday, March 11th, 1955.

I suppose a billion typewriter tonight will be addressing notes to E. Roscoe Murrow for his statement, in discussing the flurry over Mrs. Eisenhower's health, wherein he remarked that she has had distinguished first lady predecessors, -- Lord, how I must mis-spell that word, "such as the wife of Andrew Jackson, F. D. R.,

What the letters will be written about, of course, will have to do with Mrs. Andrew Jackson as being a former first lady of the White House. I suppose it is pretty well known that Mrs. Jackson never made it to that distinguished address. Sometimes I think commentators like Lowell Thomas and, for all I know, E. Roscoe, wilfully mis-state something or give a statement a twist that suggests an untrue presentation just to see if and how many people are really listening. I felt this very strongly when Lowell Thomas pronounced "Desiree" as "Dazirey". Be that as it may, I shall not be surprised if one night week, Mr. Murrow doesn't have something to say about the protests coming to hand as a result of his suggestion that Rachel Jackson was once a mistress of the White House.

I got a report from my agents today, concerning the state of the willows which I had better pass along to Old Ponita. It seems, oddly enough, that some of the trees on the margin of the river are unfolding their leaves and others in the same neighborhood and also on the margin of the river, haven't started putting out buds. I never knew it before but there must be difference types of wild willow and what this somewhat paradoxical information regarding the present of things will mean to Sister Frances Jerome's aerial photographer I have no idea, but I shall leave it for her to struggle with. Come think of it, I'm wondering how the Pirate's Alley apartment is getting apparently enjoying a rest from occupants, since it was supposed to be conveyed to Carolyn on the 1st of March. Perhaps she will fly over Cane River this coming week and so mosey along to the Crescent City to have a look at it, and to receive the South Carolina ladies. I certainly hope she and Kay don't undertake operating the plane and "striking" the photos together, for two ladies at a time will be enough for me a single sitting.

I could bat Essie Mae for giving my name to a bag such as the one of the enclosed letter. I shall write La Hily. I don't know if she wants Louisiana furniture of slave carpenter stuff. But why we should have likenesses, I cannot imagine. I suppose she is a crack pot.....

7251

Sunday, March 13th, 1955.

Memorandum: How nice to find your Tuesday letter in Saturday's post and how kind of you to share in expressing a thought of thanks for the eventual contact established with Dora.

How much easier are burdens to bear when shared, how much greater the joy when gratitude for their lightening can be equally celebrated jointly. In the same post with your letter came another from Dora. I shall enclose it herewith or under separate cover. Although I read his earlier communication with some difficulty, I now have the impression that the present one is quite different. It indicates that, --and at long last, --he has eventually moved his ground to the concept which I outlined to him in my initial letter and which I sketched out for him in my telephone conversation. It might be interesting to examine his letter to declining the South Carolina project; my response, a copy of which I made for you and this present communication. I, personally, have not the wish or opportunity to make such a study but I find the general pattern vaguely interesting as I try to recall how the pieces fitted or failed to fit together as I try to recall the differences as expressed in his two letters from Pensacola. They strike me as being the composition of a person just fallen in love when all values are heavily discounted and subject to change from minute to minute. Perhaps Dora temporarily fell in love with somebody or some place which would account for the unexpected nature of the first and the somewhat nearer approach to what appears to be a truer appreciation of values in this latest.

I regret that his first letter somehow indicated that he had failed utterly to comprehend the potentials that had been presented to him under such difficulties as the harrowing pursuit to contact him had engendered into the business. Perhaps the whole thing was so clear in my own mind that I was wrong in assuming he could grasp its importance to him. I suppose the regret I feel stems from the high regard I have for his dependability. Somehow we tend to assume that we can depend upon our friends to make gestures of understanding even when we become fuddle things so that nobody on earth might reasonably be expected to do so.

A part of the time element in the original communication that seemed so important to me was to be found in the opportunity



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1955, March 14th, Monday

an early contact would provide for him to slide up to Charleston before the ladies left, to make the most of those few days to meet their friends in the Moncks Corner and Charl neighborhood and thus be in full command when they left for Louisiana, leaving the plantation in his hands, already made conversant with various and sundry aspects of how things functioned on both the social and administrative levels. Perhaps this wasn't so important. Anyway, its importance failed to register in his mind as a result of the outline I had presented in my telephone conversation.

But now it appears the ladies will stop by Pensacola Beach a day or two and thus get acquainted with him. What a stroke of luck once more that they decided to travel by car and not by plane to New Orleans. Obviously my job in this matter is finished. I hope I am wrong in feeling that a fundamental crack has not appeared in Dora and Lottie's friendship. Somehow I feel that although such a thing doesn't show through the coat of paint, may somehow have developed in the masonry beneath. But if the saving of Dora from years of poverty and destitution while at to earn a livelihood in business has been achieved by this contact than gladly am I prepared to place my friendship as a sacrifice on the altar of a compassion that exceeds mere friendship. And may I express the apologies I owe to you for having burdened with all this endless talk which probably has no excuse for an interminable rigamarole. I like that word, - for probably end the whole thing will resolve itself much more to everyone's satisfaction than had my efforts been less persistent.

Our lovely summer weather continues. Pilgrims continued yesterday but I got a break today with only one, a gentleman from Sioux City, Iowa, which was interesting only because 24 hours I had people from Sioux City, Iowa, too, but today's gentleman didn't know yesterday's gentlemen and ladies. Two sets of Sioux City Sues converging on the same insignificant in Louisiana, unknown to each other, within such a limited time. A quiet Sunday at Yucca is as rare as one in Lyme these weeks and Lestan is as one with little Miss Lee in reveling in the opportunity to accomplish no end of little matters, and particularly over-due correspondence. It was pleasant to have temptations in the line of reading material to hand to deflect this keyboard and tonight I'm folding up my beard comparatively early immediately after a little go round with mein lieber Om so accumulate a bit of extra shut-eye against a busy program that this week will probably bring. I'm so much there was a moresel of quiet in Lyme, too, on this Sabbath.....

7253

Monday, March 14th, 1955.

Memorandum: How nice to find your letter in today's post, together with the clipping concerning the death of my old friend, Bessie Potter Vonnoh. What a wonderful mind and memory you are forever surprising me with, and not once in a while but always.

And thanks much for passing along the information regarding the present whereabouts of Mrs. Roosevelt. I greatly appreciate this information as I shall want to write a follow up letter to her, cancelling my earlier request.

I am sorry I did not get to hear more than the report of the Secretary of State. His broadcast left me almost as much in the dark concerning Far Eastern policy as before. I should have so much enjoyed the Sirkosky report. I had not heard it mentioned in the news broadcast and I am so much interested in your summary of it on my behalf. I hadn't thought about a second Pearl Harbor in Formosa but, now that you mention what he had to say about one good banging of that place and I can well imagine that in view of greater efficiency in destructive engines as opposed to back in those dark ages of 1941, quite an obliteration, I suppose might be expected in these latter years of bigger and better atoms.

Only you, because you are you, could possibly appreciate how dumbfounded I was this morning when the postman handed me Marcel Proust's "Cities of the Plain," as read by your friend, Alexander Scourby. I shall not get around to sample it until later tonight or, perhaps on the morrow. Sufficient unto the moment is the pleasure I experience in realizing that it is here. And since confession is good for the soul, I might as well confess you that I doubted very much that it had been recorded, in spite of the information given T. Ashton Thompson. It goes without saying I shall write the Honorable Thompson before folding up my beard, and la Bellonbach will also get a letter, as will the Chalkleys and, merely for good measure, John Hall Jacobs.

But I am more puzzled than ever that the Bellonbacher letter never came to hand. And, as I long suspected, our prayers for the recording probably never were given much attention, since we should have been advised the book was in preparation since we requested at least once or twice since it was started on its way.



7254

I must say it seems odd to record the first and the fourth volume first, but because the fourth has been recording, I have a feeling that it will not be easier to fill in volumes 2 and 3, and after that it shouldn't be so difficult to get the final item in the series complete. It seems to me that the first and fourth volumes of A La Recherche contain the salient philosophical and sociological features of Proust's philosophy and that this has long last been made available for the blind gives me vast satisfaction and my delight is heightened to the n-th degree because had it not been for your concerted efforts in joining me in our assault on the Library of Congress, you know perfectly well, what with all the opposition we had to encounter, it never would have been effected.

A telephone from Carolyn states that she has an appointment with Mr. Murchison, or Merchison, or whatever, this week regarding the colored photo mural and so doesn't know if she will pass this way to get the tender willow leaves while they are still tender green. She is having difficulty getting away in order to be in New Orleans when The Bluff ladies arrive. All I hope is that all the of them don't converge on me at the same time. The Murchison gentleman is the same fellow who put up so many millions for Mr. Young during the latter's fight last winter, --a successful one, I believe, to acquire control of the New York Central. I should imagine that if she got the mural job in question, a flock of other would-be top shots in the oil business might well emulate this man who appears to have been so successful. I never met the man but his nephew is married to Senator Frederick's only daughter and occasionally said nephew and his mama get down this way to see me, or rather to see the crepe myrtles, some of which, because of their rare colors, appeal to them mightily.

My favorite statuette of Bessie Potter Vonoh's is in the Metropolitan and used to stand in or under a glass, the whole resting on a pedestal in the balcony just to the left, -- on the 2nd floor, of the main stair case as one enters the Museum. It's in bronze, 5' high and represents the winged female figure whose draperies and figure present one of the loveliest lines I know. I think I have spoken of the Vonoh place on a little island in the river, just south of Fontainebleau where they owned an ancient cloistered monastery, the major portion of which was for their guests whom they often didn't see for weeks on end when they were engaged in their creative work in their studio in the Refectory, at the far end of the cloister or island, the two portions of the establishment being connected only by the cloistered gallery. It was a charming place and I loved the Vonohs. But more of this and a billion other things at the next and the next the next sittings. It was so kind and so remarkable of memory that you should have passed along this obituary to me and again my thanks for making another day and another page of life so happy in thus remembering me.....

7255

uesday, March 15th, 1955.

Memorandum: I have a half dozen letters and none of them of much interest.

The latest acquisition by that Marshall woman is arresting. If one has always dreamed of sailing the South Seas in a tramp sailing boat, I suppose the next best thing to that is having a tramp boat tied up by your barn, just in case a deluge rivaling Noah's should suddenly descend. What the lady needs much more than a boat, I think, is an anchor for herself but the unpredictable and the undependable probably go hand in hand, and not with an anchor. To quote an ancient plantation mistress of mutual acquaintance:

"Anything you do is alright, --but don't do it." I need scarcely tell you that my response to the invitation to see the Russian Ballet. It was kind of her to invite me but I'm not dreaming of going anywhere and I can imagine nothing that would give me more exhaustion than spending the day at Old Bonita, attending the ballet and then driving down here.

A letter from Bootsie Gay, "The Court Yard Candle", as her stationary describes her, and sufficiently well known to me, telephoned to ask that some of Clemence's paintings be sent down to her by the 20th. She followed her telephone by a letter, covering the same ground. I have no confidence in the lady's sobriety and if Carolyn passes this way, en route to New Orleans, I shall send her half dozen by her if she wants to bother with them. If she does then Bootsie can snuff herself out the way she does the other court yard candles. I'll save her letter to give to Carolyn, if she passes this way, and if she doesn't, that is alright so far as I am concerned and with Clemence, too, although when the latter exclaims herself, I think she had just come to see me, following a visit to Fugabou's mama and I suspect both these old age pensioners had been tipping a bit, so I'm not sure if Clemence was quite



7256

Wednesday, March 16th, 1955.

I was reminded of the thread bare question as to whether the egg or the chicken first made a bow on this planet, for as has happened so many years in the past, I have discovered the first honeysuckle blossom and the first humming bird of the season on the same day and almost at the same time. Somebody will someday do a story under some such title as The Honeysuckles And The Humming Bird is which, after the manner of Wilde's fairy stories, will point out how the last humming bird, planning to joint the autumn migration across the Gulf, had to remain behind when the others took to the air and how a beloved honeysuckle whom the bird had courted all summer, had provided a joint quarters for them both for hibernating. And so it will be that each Spring, just in advance of the Spring migrations, one honeysuckle and one humming bird will proclaim the advent of the flower and feather season by appearing to sympathetic souls ahead of time. A spray of honeysuckle along the picket fence of the avant court unfolded this afternoon about 2 and as I drew it toward me to catch my first breath of the year, a lovely red throated hummingbird whirled alongside, his wings stirring the air against my face, he was close. It was all very pleasant and already I'm looking forward to a repetition next year, although, as I recall, I was getting my hair cut on the gallery when the first ruby throat made his appearance between this paragraph and the above, Celeste telephoned me to say that Madam Millsbaugh had telephoned her to say she had tried to reach me by telephone today because ~~Bessie~~ Bootsie Gay's daughter in Matchitoches had received a telephone call from her mother in New Orleans about the Clemence pictures, to., etc., etc. and the whole thing boils down to this fact, Madam Millsbaugh is a friend of Bootsie, and in view of business relations as between Melrose and Matchitoches, I feel it not unwise to lend a hand to a business that is very unpleasant.

Our hot, dry weather continues and water pipes are running madly all over the gardens. I must ask my older friends about the potentials of vegetables planted by moonlight rather than at noon day, for the bed I planted on Wednesday night of last week pushed out rows of or rather triangles of vegetables yesterday while the Tuesday bed, planted in dimishing rows by my helper 24 hours before mine, came up 24 hours later. I attribute the whole race depends on the start and that moonlight, indeed, must be productive to a great degree of germination than sunshine. But if the parallel or contrast were carried into other fields of human endeavor in the field of greater productivity especially, I'm quite sure if I brought the matter up in the press, I might get quite an astonishing response. But enough of this silly speculation, for I must roll up my sleeves and get at the mail. May the honeysuckles and humming birds be appearing in your local garden real.

7257

Wednesday, March 16th, 1955.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your letter of Friday, the 11th, in today's post. Undoubtedly it might have been expected to arrive one day earlier, had not the envelope born a notation by rubber stamp, indicating that it had inadvertently stopped off at Monroe before being correctly shunted on to Melrose. Odd that this should have happened so soon after the Manhattan addressed from Melrose should have first started off in the direction of Houston, of all places.

I can well imagine how shocked you were by the news of the lady whom you had expected for dinner so soon, for, I, too, although I know not why, since I had not seen her in so long, was somehow quite unprepared for the news. It would seem that there are people, likesmartly uniformed, swanky military units one sees on parade or even marching off to war, and never does the thought of d enter our minds in regard to such a person or such a military unit. Naturally we know that every human being may succumb sooner or late and that military companies, advancing to war, are bound to be cut to pieces, and yet such a thought never seems to quicken our imagination or enter into our thoughts, and so, I was surprised the more at the news of the death, for somehow she was one of the people with whom I had never associated the thought.

How much less surprising it would have been to have learned that her girl friend to whom you said you were writing, should have preceded her, for the life of unhappiness and frustration might well have been terminated the first, because of all the adversities through which she has always seemed to have waded. What sorrow the news is going to bring to her. How effectively, in considering the differences, especially the physical, between these two people, have again proven that it is utterly impossible to get anywhere in deduction from personal appearances how the life expectancy of the other may be.

I am so glad A. had the trip back home again a while back and she has had the pleasure of anticipating another although it cannot realized. For these thoughts must have given her much happiness during her illness, and how good it is to know that she has had some to make her comfortable and to be with right up until the end. I think few people are so blessed as little Miss Lee and Lestan in the street.

strengthened



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with which they are endowed in telepathy so that distances evaporate at a thought and separation never seems to exist. But for so many and especially for the departed one, there was perhaps a requirement for personal contact without which her spiritual forces might not have been able to fill in the spaces between those absent from her immediate physical contact. And assuming that this was so, I so glad that the feeling of physical nearness when she suddenly departs was present, for it must have made the departure so much easier, she was even conscious that she was on the point of setting out.

And may I thank you for having, in your characteristic thoughtfulness, sent me the address of the Martini lady. I shall be so glad to have this next week or whenever it is that Kay arrives, for I have in mind doing something with the information that may, fact, eventually please both ladies.

Our summer weather gave way to Spring during the afternoon when the thermometer skidded from 80 to 45. Most vegetation stands still between 45 and 55 degrees of temperature, but for the most part, this will merely retard growth and not set anything back or knock it out. Except for some Nebraska numbers who took up most of my morning, I had a comparatively free hand at gardening, and as J. H. had bought three strong armed field hands in my direction, I made the most of the opportunity presented. I thought the coolness of the afternoon afforded an excellent opportunity to do a final bit of transplanting and so I made the most of it, for we are promised a gradual warming again on the morrow and Spring, from that point on, I suppose, will be finished for this year and summer will have taken over but completely.

I neglected to respond to your inquiry about the fate of Reform Plantation the other day. The price asked for it was so out of line that the prospective buyer declined. In J. H.'s opinion, the property was worth about five or six thousand dollars and the Randolph Joneses asked fifteen thousand. The owner, as so used to be the case in the Hatcher area, considers the house as a liability and are quite indifferent, as in the case of Windy Hill Manor, if it falls down or is torn to pieces. But must let it even be expected that the house is the matter of primary interest to the prospective buyer, and from a valuation of nothing it suddenly catapults to ten thousand dollars, and in this instance, the game is off before really getting started.

0837

7259

Thursday, March 17th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Our cool spell lingered but 24 hours and this afternoon the thermometer was back in the 80's but the spanking breeze from the Gulf made it seem rather more 70ish.

The weather bureau promised cloudy skies and windily scattered showers but it turned out to be only partly cloudy, what with blue sky and big old puffy bowls of fleecy white cotton, contrasting wonderfully, the one against the other.

And this pleased little Miss Ramsey inordinately for she stopped at this bend of the river at 10 o'clock last night, after I had just folded up my beard. She had had a busy day, and accordingly thought beard folding an excellent gesture for her. And so she was up and abroad early this morning, taking a few finishing color shots for "I Live In A Museum" and the afternoon in flying up and down Cane River in her car, getting some color shots of the water and reflections thereon for the Cane River article and for Sister Frances Jerome's volume. I am holding the thought that she may be departing for New Orleans on the morrow and if circumstances should prevent her from so doing and if she must return to Old Bonita, Bootsie Gay's Sunday publicity will certainly be a fizzle.

I saw Pat at breakfast and so was a little surprised to hear his voice on the telephone at 11 this morning. He said the Louisiana Bar Association and some medical group is scheduled to hold a meeting in Hatchitoches on Sunday, March 27th, and he wondered if I could arrange a tour for about 75 at noon and perhaps a like group later in the afternoon. I said I could. I am always delighted when he discovers people in his business realm want to explore the old plantation for I feel his own estimate of the value of the place expands a little with each such visitation.



7260

One of the civic groups to which Celeste belongs is planning to raise funds for further restoration of the old Lemme house in town. One of the moving spirits contacted me and said they thought a paying tour could be drummed up for early autumn but wondered if Celeste would cooperate so far as the Melrose angle was concerned. I suggested that the plans be formulated in camera by which ever members are most desirous of the venture and then appoint Celeste as chairman of the Committee and, knowing her as we do, that would move along smoothly enough. And so that was undertaken and it worked. The lady was delighted and appealed to me for assistance when October rolls round. I expressed delight at the prospect of being of service in all she had to relate, and so, I guess, that is it.

The March Talking Book Topics came to hand in today's post and there appear to be two or three items I shall want to order. There is a dual biography of Benedict Arnold and Major Andre which I should like to explore a bit and what is claimed to be a first rate biography of Eleanor of Aquitaine by Kelly or some such name. I know so little of that remarkable lady although I thought I should get better acquainted with her when encountering her in the pages of Henry Adams' "Mont St. Michel and Chartres".

I have found myself thinking of you so often during this St. Patrick's Day, wondering if the inevitable parade on Fifth Avenue was carried out as usual and if, through subway evasion of traffic, you could get across town without having to be held up for hours by the endless marching in which so many of the Irish seem to indulge with so much relish. It occurred to me only tonight that although Boston must have a much heavier Irish population than New York, somehow no one ever seems to mention the public festivities in New England for good old Saint Pat, but I suppose there is probably drum beating and celebrating in that quarter, too, even though it doesn't make the front page in such large streamers as the New York Herald.

I want to do a little more reading before I call it a day, for I am in the midst of one of the Guerment parties wherein the author does such neat tricks at setting forth the vast multitude of impulses motivating the remarks and gestures of a whole galaxy of guests and I find his penetration and subtle shading, especially of those who would climb social ladders, most exhilarating. Of course it has been 15 or 20 years since, under my own steam, I last of poor Swann and his approaching end, but in re-reading about it once more, I find Swann just as noble and interesting a citizen of the world as when last I ran through the pain of his illness and dying. I suppose it is a little early for me to begin sounding off about volumes 2 and 3 and 5, 6 and 7 recorded but perhaps in another six months, it might be timely to do so. Of course the 4th volume was easier to get after the 1st had been read and progressively, I should think, it should be easier to get each missing one into the war. I fear this letter is duller than usual. Forgive me. I guess my severe

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Friday, March 18th, 1955.

Memorandum:

And so the Weather Bureau this noon spoke of snow having fallen in Manhattan during this morning, and I was amazed. I know not why but somehow the month of March in Manhattan forever holds two contrasting pictures, the loveliness of the Flower Show and Lexington Avenue outside oozing with thick oozy blackened snow that has turned to mush. I suppose the sheer beauty of the flowers and their delightful settings inside Grand Central Palace must have received a slap in or on my mind at some visit or other when, immediately quitting the exquisitely fragrant interior, I stepped out into the street, still afloat with evidence of a be-draggled looking tail end of winter in the street. These two contrasting pictures, engraven forever in my memory at any mention of March in Manhattan, came back so vividly to mind today when the news of the snowfall came to my attention so unexpectedly. I notice E. Roscoe didn't say anything about the unpleasantness on his broadcast tonight but he seemed to have a great deal of political, economic and international subjects to take up and so perhaps the atmospheric situation may have indeed been a little worse than his silence on the matter would suggest.

-- It was still summer here, until noon. Then it turned cool again and tonight the thermometer is in the 40's. But we are promised summer again for tomorrow afternoon, and so the month jogs along.

Carolyn left right after breakfast for Lafayette and either remained there tonight or perhaps continued on to Pirates Alley. She took some Hunter engravings with her. She may even attend the high-land fling at the Court Yard Candle's place on Sunday, or she may not. She may also contact the South Carolina travelers, or she may not, although she will telephone Kay's cousin with whom they are to stay while in the Crescent City. She plans returning to Melrose on Monday to get a few more color shots of the river and thence home to Marshall and on to Dallas for a conference with the Magnolia Oil people on Wednesday or Thursday.

Early this morning I went to Clemence's cabin and got 6 or 8 of her creations, asking her to set prices on each. On returning to Yucca I made out an invoice to Bootsie Gay, increasing the prices in all instances so that Clemence, should the things be sold, will get



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Friday, March 18th, 1955

than she asked for and there will still be enough left over to cover the transportation costs of the purveyor of this merchandise. I also included a couple of my own primitives from the Hunter brush of several years back, putting a fat price on them, so that if they, should be disposed of, everybody will realize a little something all around although I have grown to like the couple of my own that I include to fatten the show and shall be the happier if they are returned to me.

I am taking the liberty on the morrow to place a package in the post for little Miss Lee. It will depart at the time this letter does but of course, will be received several days after this reaches its destination. I suppose, I apologize on two counts, - first in sending natal greetings somewhat prematurely, but I thought, in view of whatever festivities are planned at Lyme, it might be more convenient to have the package disposed of a day or two in advance. I also apologize for the bulkiness of the package, which looks mountainous and therefore is deceiving, so its contents are concerned. I have placed a fairly good sized paper sack in the top of the package so that the contents may be transferred into it to make toting easier. I think I mentioned sometime back that I had in mind adding a pot to your collection and because I left same in the cartons in which they reached me, --thinking these would protect same in transit to Lyme, I left them thus enclosed and suppose you will find it easy to dispose of them readily in some convenient trash can. I believe the cartons bear the name of the establish of the merchant-planter, as I had them forwarded here in the Estate's so that this might be another good reason for making a disposal of said cartons and thrusting their contents into the paper sack.

There were several letters in today's post, not one of which any of my secretaries could interpret, for they were all hand written, -- Miss Nellie, Kay, Dora, Mrs. Stirling. Perhaps someone more experienced in long hand will pass this way between now and Monday mail time, I hope.

I so much regret your return of winter, assuming it may discourage open air enthusiasts to get into said open air over the impending week end. As for myself, I am holding the thought that I may have no pilgrims for I should relish a quiet week end before heading into a week that will probably be pretty well filled, assuming that the Cooper River may reach the Cape shortly and next week end's assortment of legal minds will certainly gum things up a week from Sunday. But regardless of the snow and cold, Spring cannot be ruled out for long and may la Primavera bring La Pair with her, hand in hand.....

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Sunday, March 20th, 1955.

Memorandum: Carolyn had telephoned Kay's cousin in New Orleans but although the Carolina ladies had been expected all day, they had not as yet arrived. Carolyn had expected to remain in the Crescent City until sometime Monday so perhaps she was able to contact them during the Sabbath and so invite them over to Pirates Alley. If not, they will probably make a round at Old Bonita after their visits to Melrose and Briarwood.

Warm, humid, high winds have been the order of the entire week end, and while they didn't reach tornado proportions here as they did in the northern part of the State, still they were ranging from 20 to 30 miles an hour all Saturday and today, slapping unhooked blinds and banging doors but taking off only the dead limbs on ancient pecan trees and tossing piles of trash thither and yon.

I was truly disappointed that an electric storm somewhere up the road on Saturday night made it impossible to hear anything of the Clifton Fadiman program which I should have enjoyed so much. But as the reading material is not affected by static, I was able to do a bit with little Marcel and his psychiatric adventures at Balbec and I enjoyed that in lieu of the Fadiman business.

Along about 9 last night, Carolyn telephoned from New Orleans to say that it would appear the press is going to give some attention to the Hunter canvases and said she had been delegated to get in touch with me to see if I could arrange a telephone interview for them with Clemence. I pointed out that like other primitive painters, Miss Hunter is not adept in making use of Alexander, Graham Bell's invention but that I would have here by the telephone today between 2 and 3 if they cared to call. No call came through, indicating either that they felt it wasn't worth the try or that the long distance lines from New Orleans weren't functioning. The present telephone strike in the Southern states is making long distance calls a speculative business with the thing being achieved with unusual speed sometimes and no connections established at all at other times.

Carolyn said she had telephoned Kay's cousin in New Orleans but although the Carolina ladies had been expected all day, they had not as yet arrived. Carolyn had expected to remain in the Crescent City until sometime Monday so perhaps she was able to contact them during the Sabbath and so invite them over to Pirates Alley. If not, they will probably make a round at Old Bonita after their visits to Melrose and Briarwood. From past experience, I assume the Carolina girls tend to run behind schedule and as I had gathered they might be here sometime during the middle of the week, I foresee the possibility that by being behind the time table, they may well arrive at the week end when the legal minds descend on the place in vast numbers, but I'm hoping this may be avoided. One at a time would seem to work so much better all around.

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At supper Saturday night, J. H. remarked that the night should be a big one at the local honkey-tonk since most of the field hands had worked during the week and therefore were possessed of pelf in their Saturday night pockets. Today's report covering last night seems to indicate J. H. was quite right. Charlie Turner and one of the Gillie boys got well carved and Bootsie-boy Hachette got shot through the hand and through the leg while his brogther in law, one of the Baillon married but a month or so back, got shot twice in the leg, one of the bullets smashing an ankle bone. I'm not positive as to what ingredien are requisite for making an evening at the honkey tonk a success, but I believe last night's was general considered on the more successful side. Oddly enough, the shooting was not done by the cafe patrons but rather by the operator of the place, Alphonse Metoyer's son, Raymond, who started the excitement by firing into a group of his customers, --thank Heaven Gimble Brothers don't practice such tactics, and after he had knocked out a couple of customers, the carving got started by some excited patron who, like the rest of those present, hadn't any notion as to why the gun pl had started but since blood was spilling, the knife might as well do what it could to add to the gore.

This afternoon Clemence gave a demonstration of the difficulty on encounter in conveying the importance of mechanical operations to such a member of the pre-gaget school of one River residents. Both the Times Picayune and the New Orleans Item were scheduled to tel between 2:30 and 3 for the two interviews. Clemence came by at 12:30 then decided to skip home and be back at 2:15. I had to go get her. We sat here by my desk. As the hands of the clock approached the hour of 3, I sat her in my chair, the telephone along side, explaining I had to contact some people at the front gate at 3:10, and that she was to pick up the receiver immediately when the bell rang so that Miss Maude of the garage wouldn't hear the thing ringing and pick up her receiver and so scramble up the New Orleans connection I said I should rush over to the front gate, park my guests under the big oak and be back within a couple of minutes and that she should say Hello when the telephone rang and in response to the request to speak to me, she would say: "Hold the wire just a moment". I accordingly called her attention to the gold fish she could watch while waiting for the 'phone, --they sit hard by the instrument, and then at 3:10, I dashed to the front gate, greeted my pilgrims and then rushed back here to see what, if anything had happened. I found Yucca deserted. I looked around and discovered the yOodd year old Miss Hunter fiddling around out in the bamboo at the back of the white garden with her 40 year old helper and husband who have live together for about a year now but obviously couldn't bare to be separa half an hour. Whether the New Orleans call was ever effective up to t point of the unanswered telephone, we shall never know. Well, so much for attempted publicity of a primitive painter and I sent the lovers a and got on with entertaining the pilgrims, who were followed by Dr. Ra and friends and so the day has played out. And tomorrow is Spring....

7265

Monday, March 21st, 1955.

Memorandum:

Today has been among the stranger days I can recall. Whenever in the future, somebody or other refers to the Spring of 1955, I shall recall today with vividness.

It was a day of contrasts, too, what with the thermometer standing at 74 this morning and tonight, --I write a midnight, it registers 30 and Heaven alone knows what the tender green all over the gardens, not skipping the triangular vegetable beds will look like when its sun up on March 22nd.

At dinner today, Dan appeared, having much luggage carried up into your room, the adjoining one and the bath room. Pat occupies the suite on the other end of the house. He announced he had come to spend several days as it is easier to get back on your feet if you are away from drinking friends in town. What with Carolyn scheduled to arrive sometime during the late evening and the South Carolina ladies on the docket for a day or two later, and the housing space for their entertainment thus pre-emptorily appropriated, I naturally was not entranced by this unexpected alteration of my plan.

And so the day played out and along about 8 o'clock, Carolyn arri I told her frankly how the situation was. She said she would spend th night in town and go on to Marshall, trying to get back here next week to finish up the pictures she had anticipated taking on the morrow. But she said she should like to have a long chat before leaving, as several things had happened in New Orleans which she thought I would be interested in.

She said the Court Yard Candle show was a success and that she had met loads of my friends, including Dr. Smythe of Tulane and a lady who introduced herself as Ida Mazurette. She said Idea spoke of me but she felt, -- Carolyn did, that she ought to telephone the Segelous whom she had never met, thinking they might be interested in the show and perhaps they had not seen the newspaper announcements. But as she started to leave the Court Yard, she noticed a man and woma whose ears had pri ked up, she thought, when my name had been mentione so, because she felt as she did, she went over and asked them if they might be the Segelous and they said that they were.

At just this point in her story, my telephone rang. It was Bob Segelou telephning from New Orleans. He said the Delgado Museum



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will have a von Gogh show during the first 3 weeks in April and hard on its heels will follow a Hunter show. He said he has made arrangements for a TV program, reaching about 40,000 listeners, for this broadcast in the Gulf area for about the 27th of April. He said there is something else for the 28th on the same subject and something else again for the 29th. The National or Columbia system, I cannot remember which, is fiddling with the idea of putting the thing on a coast-to-coast broadcast on either of the dates mentioned above. He wanted to know if he might collar an assistant and plane and fly up here to take some color films, movies, of Clemence and some shots of the African House. I said he might. And all that sounded very good.

Then when that conversation had been out, Carolyn resumed her recital. She said that all of the Hunter canvases sent to New Orleans had been sold and that the Yurt Yard would be sending a check covering same forthwith. That will make Clemence happy.

She said she had telephoned Kay's cousin in New Orleans and chatted with her. At precisely that moment, the or my telephone rang again. New Orleans was calling. It was Mr. Pipes. He said he had driven over with the ladies from Pensacola where they had come en route from The Bluff. He said all of them, - he and they, --were driving back to Charleston on Sunday. Patsies be. The efforts of the past month, apparently, have not been in vain. I said: "Don't you think Aunt Will is a doll", to which he responded, --and I loved this: "Yes, but Kay is pretty nice, too." Well, brother, he certainly had better go to work, that's all I can say.

I explained to him and asked him to tell the ladies it would be impossible for me to entertain them at Melrose but that I should be glad if they cared to pass this way. Isn't it remarkable that Dan had to put on this particular act and this particular time. But the sale of the Hunter canvases and the fusion of the Storm-O'Brien-Register trio balance off my personal disappointments in the other bracket and so it all comes out not so much even as with a favorable credit side, it would seem.

I expect there were other details about the New Orleans doings that I shall report on from time to time, unimportant things but interesting. But the hour advances and I find my eye lids growing heavy and so I had better break off about now although I could easily gallop along over another page or two, and still not cover all the doings. It was dark and bitter cold when I took Carolyn to the gate and once back here, I found myself concluding that the incipient tornado we had this afternoon, plus the jumping jack tactics of the thermometer, pluss all the New Orleans business made this among the odder March 21st's I can remember.....

7267

Tuesday, March 22nd, 1955.

Memorandum: I tell you that Lestan is now the proud possessor of a "cherry" robe and that he loves the Lyme whence it came and the "cherry" robe next to himself.

For not only has he examined it to his utter satisfaction and delight, so far as appearance goes, but what is more, he has, as is so often the case, splashed through a bath at the end of day before sitting down to take pen in hand, and that the garment feels just a delightful to his touch as to his visual examination revealed it to be.

Shortly after the first reference to such an item, he twice intended adding a post script, remarking that as robes go in this climate, wool may well be avoided, what with moth problems in the South. But the post scripts somehow failed to get jotted down and today's receipt of the robe indicates that the talk about wool was unnecessary. And added to the color and fitting of the garment is the added fact which I think he relishes, too, -- the fact that it can be tossed into a tub on occasion and thereby restored to its pristine loveliness without any dire thoughts as to whether it will weather washing. And so it is that for months ahead this item is going to be the nightly companion both for the hours of correspondence and for reading and that both lines of occupation will be the happier because Lyme will thus ever seem the nearer and round about.

And so, with the day having started off under such pleasant auspices from the direction of the Post Office, one might turn to survey the weather situation in whatever area he chanced to find himself and almost any place in the United States, according to the weather reports, was on the cold side. Locally there was ice in the bird bath and in the pot. The butterfly lilies, up about a foot now, were flattened out to their initial starting point. Some of the canna leaves look as though they had been left too long in the toaster. Surely the cold didn't do the triangular beds of vegetables any good but they don't show the ill effects the more delicate things do. The banana plants which had finally taken off to a pretty good start will have to try all over again and whether they produce any fruit or not is highly problematical. And the cold continues, with a high today under a glaring sun of 52 degrees and tonight we are promised a low of about 34 while tomorrow the thermometer will



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sky rocket to 78, it is said, and I'm all in favor of that.

Letters from Washington, enclosed, speak for themselves, as do the copies of my responses. I have sent the copies of the August 18th letters to T. Ashton Thompson, to wind up the business and make it evident, as they do, it seems to me, that the Louisiana Representative was misled when told I had been advised that "Cities of the Plain" was in production. Certainly there was nothing in that August 18th letter from Mr. Patterson that in the slightest way suggested anything of the sort.

The mail also contained a letter from Bob Segelou which was too long for today's reading and probably touches on matters covered in last night's telephone conversation. I shall get around to read it on the morrow. There was also one from La Storm but none of my secretaries are up to making out a word of her writing and so I shall have to hold that for more experienced readers. It was probably written from Pensacola, as it is cancelled from there, and, I hope, contains her first impression of Dora which undoubtedly was favorable since the duo became a trio as the New Orleans hejira developed.

The company room continues to be occupied by Dan which certainly makes ducks and drakes of my plans for entertaining the South Carolina travelers. Obviously Dora wants to come with them which is understandable, so far as the Melrose visit is concerned but it seems impossible for me to convey to him that it would be better for the moment if he left the impression in these parts that he is still vacationing in Florida, I think. But I cannot expect anyone here to comprehend the subtle lines that would produce the most desired impressions, and since I had such difficulty going to sell Dora the silver platter in the first place, it is impossible to suppose I could convey anything much less evident.

The post did not bring me the check from the Court Yard Candle but I advanced L. Hunter the price she had voluntarily set on her paintings for I knew she was completely broke and I thought that immediate realization on her investment would make her happy, as it certainly did, and such promptness may make things easier for putting across the TV story when it comes up shortly for the making.

Oh, ho, ho... So many things to talk about but I shall save additional points for another sitting. My day has been so happy, as is my evening, thanks to the "cherry" robe and to Lyme.....

7269

Wednesday, March 23rd, 1955.

Memorandum:

Again I find myself at complete relaxation, thanks to a nice hot bath, followed by one elegant "cherry robe". At the first wearing, it was a garment to be draped about my person. Now, with the second wearing, it has become part and parcel of my own form and I'm as happy as a clam.

In a couple of memoranda earlier than this one, I had saying that I am perfectly assured that in the event that any pot or reaching your true hand in a recent package from down this way, said or pan being a duplicate of ones already in your possession, you will make use of your usual good judgement by passing it along to any of your friends who might be in line for such an utensil.

I read the Segelou letters, one from yesterday, one of today's pot but as they were long and my secretaries weak, I shall have to save them for another go round in certain paragraphs, requesting various particulars regarding La Hunter's life and doings. It would appear that the Delgado show is really going to be something and that the coverage by TV is likely to be unique. I shall knock off what I can remember of requested points tonight and send it along and will add further data after having an opportunity to re-read the thing again on the morrow.

Little Miss Clemence came to see me this morning, obviously on two counts, first, to say that she had put her money to good account by buying a turkey with some little ones and some chickens. This was undoubtedly to cancel out anything I might have heard about her frolic in the big road, following the payment she received for her paintings. I told her I thought turkeys and chickens were fine but that I thought a dab of wine would have also helped the festivities along, too. She giggled mightily at that, not quite sure if I had heard of her gaiety or if I might really be expressing a profound opinion, beyond her comprehension.

And the second reason she came was to show me a picture she had painted on a board Blythe Rand had brought her last Sunday. It is a busy business, the figures a little too small but withal, active. One gentleman has been flattened out by another who, in turn, is being shot by the first gentleman's wife. A doctor is



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approaching, indicating wonderfully prompt service. In the upper center several figures are seated at a table, --not the Last Supper, but merely gambling. In the lower right corner, a gentleman is talking to a lady, but the latter's husband, who objects to this, is approaching with a large club to put an end to either the wife or her rival, one isn't sure which. Also on the right a fancy bridge lamp, copied from one I "loaned" the artist, stand solidly on the ground, about the size of a street lamp. Balancing this on the left is an electric light, suspended from the ceiling and that's all there is to it, or about all, and withal, enough!

New Orleans called about half an hour ago. Mr. Pipes established the contact and he was followed by La Storm, who, in turn, was followed by Kay who sounded radiant, I hope, and then back to Dora. They plan to pass this way on Sunday night and as my patient went to town this afternoon, I am hoping the coast may be clear by Sunday, which is to be a fairly heavy day, what with the hundred or so people I have plus a flock who will probably bob up as an after-thought following the meeting of the Bar Association in town.

Apparently they will stay at Melrose on Sunday night and then go on to Briarwood on Tuesday and then head out for South Carolina, -- all three. And praises be!

La Storm wanted to know how they were going to contact Carolyn. I told them I thought she had been called to Dallas but that she would probably be passing this way for New Orleans on Monday. I shall pull the strings in some fashion so that I shall avoid getting all four of them here at a single sitting, if possible. I am astonished how few people ever learn how advantageous it is to travel in something other than triangles and squares.

And the mention of triangles, of course, brings up the vegetable and although we had a heavy frost this morning, I believe they weren't knocked out completely, I hope. Today it started warming a little and tonight it will sag only into the 40's, but we are promised more cold for Friday and if we are really going to have more winter, I'm all in favor of having it as much in March so that April may get a better start.

I am looking forward with such keen pleasure to getting rid of all impending visitors by the 28th so that I may a bit of telepathetic birthday celebrating all by myself and little Miss Lee, as the close of March approaches.....

7271

Thursday, March 24th, 1955.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your perfectly lovely letter of Monday in today's post. Somehow, I had not expected it, knowing full well how the hurly-burlys have kept the pots bubbling in your neighborhood. But the added element of surprise could not make me more delighted than hearing from you and reading and re-reading your thoughts on the severe matters touched upon in recent correspondence. Do let me urge you not to attempt writing while Spring dwaddles along and prevents any sort of a schedule other than that based on the moment. You always know I shall understand that circumstances, not impulse, is forcing us to employ telepathy during such busy times.

I shall enclose Bob Segelous letters herewith or under separate cover so that you may have some notion as to how things are cooking down "Crescent City" way. I don't recall if it is in one of these letters or on, or by his telephone conversation the other night that the date of the proposed broadcasts were given, -- the local New Orleans one of TV to be broadcast at 1:30 on May 1st, but two or three others, one, perhaps, offer a coast-to-coast hook up either on the 27, 28th or 29th, --as each of these dates are marked down for broadcasts, but I shall make it a point to advise you well in advance so that you may keep them in mind should any of them, fall on a date when you might be near a radio or TV set.

There are a number of "firsts" having to do with the Hunter exhibit. For instance, this will be the first time that any artist of Natchitoches Parish has had a one man show at the Delgado Museum. It will also be the first time that the paintings of a negro have been exhibited in the Delgado, which, as you know, is the outstanding Museum of New Orleans. You may readily imagine that I have had the privilege of sitting on the side lines in such a business.

I have written six or eight pages of particulars to Bob and shall knock off as many more before folding up my beard tonight so that he may be amply supplied with data. In gathering up some of the notes, I have been struck again by the failure of original sources to provide correct correct information. For example, I asked Clemence how many children she had. She thought for a moment and "allowed" as how it was. Personally, I am acquainted with more than that number myself. After



1957

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I had totaled up all I could think of, I checked on the number later with Zelma and we arrived at the total which is correct, as a minimum:

4 children  
15 grandchildren  
2 great grandchildren.

Nobody can establish Clemence's precise age as no record of it was made during the first 65 years and more. She got on Old Age Pension 67 years ago and a heap of checking against events and oldsters were gone through before the sixty five year age was accepted by the State office.

Today's weather was perfect, a light breeze tempering the 86 degree and the weather bureau announcing that the cold front sweeping this way and due to arrive on the morrow has stalled somewhere in upper Texas, a let us hope it stays there.

Zelma raised one eyebrow at me as she brought in the hot biscuits for supper. Dan had remarked last night at supper that he would not be down to Melrose again in a long, long time. It was the sight of him, seated at the table, that impelled Zelma's eyebrow to star skyward. hope he doesn't honor us this week end, what with all that's cooking.

I saw the ladies across the fence this morning. Madam Regard was as gay and as sweet as a little girl, pondering on the first party which she has been bidden. So far as I know, Madam Regard contemplates no special festivities but she simply had to tell me about the lovely dress she is having made in Alexandria. She added: "And what do you think it's going to cost sixty dollars." If it were going to cost six hundred dollars, it would be worth it, just to see her delight. And when one stops to think of it, Madam Regard and Madam Hunter each receive an old age pension check of fifty-five dollars. How endlessly one might speculate on how these two respective checks are spent, what pleasure they bring to each lady and how each lady would never see eye-to-eye as to the value the other got out of her spendings. For Madam Hunter, there will be so much fun running up some sort of a smart frock for herself at home, patronizing the local honkey-tonk and painting a Museum full of pictures which Madam Regard will love using as an excuse to get rigged up in her new sixty dollar frock to go to New Orleans to see although the artist's studio is within sight of Madam Regard's own gallery.

But speaking of fine feathers impells me to return to my "cherry Red of Confederate gray. I'm like Bob Segelou's Californian who dashed home the office to jump into his kimono, for when night comes on, I love to splash through my bath and slide into my robe for lots of reasons.....

1957

7273

Friday, March 25th, 1955.

Memorandum:

How nice it would be able to keep in perfect balance an unfailing preparedness, counter-balanced by the old adage about not crossing bridges until one comes to them.

What brought this thought to mind was a telephone call from New Orleans this morning at the coffee hour, and how it happened to come in on Celeste's wire, I know not, but as I was there, the error was perfect. It was Kay calling from the Crescent City, saying that superintendent problems at the Bluff had made it necessary for them to forego their trip to see me and that they, --she, la Storm and Dora, all were departing for South Carolina forthwith. They had expected, she said, to spend a day, a night and another day with me and then slide on to Marshall for a day and a night. Kay said Dora was going with them and would perhaps occupy the house on the river for a few weeks. She asked me if I wouldn't come and stay permanently. I said that would require some studying on my part. But it's always nice being asked.

From what was said, regarding the "few weeks visit" on Dora's part, I gather he still hasn't grasped the import of the opportunity present to him. This seems so odd and yet I suppose it may stem from the fact that he hasn't the slightest notion about what earping one's living in a city may be like, and especially when one is without the usual educational demands so many places make such a ridiculous fuss about. But let me practice what I preached at the beginning of this memo and put off crossing bridges until coming to them.

We are in the midst of a radical change in the weather tonight. This afternoon the sun was brilliant and the thermometer stood at 86. It started tumbling along about 6:30 and will sage to 29 tonight, --and there goes my vegetables, I suppose.

I'm suddenly struck by the uncertainty that this may be the last memo you will receive prior to your natal day and so I want to hurry and tell you what you already know, to wit, that I am hoping that you, of all the people I know in this world, may have the happiest kind of a birthday and that gobs of the same joy may trickle down all through the ensuing 364 days until the next one rolls 'round when I can wish the same wish all over again. What with little Miss Lee dispensing so much happiness to others, how can she help but bask pleasantly and with a warm glow about the heart when so many hearts shining the happier just because of her....



7274

Frankly, I cannot tell you how delighted I am that I am going to be able to celebrate this anniversary season more or less by myself somehow it always seems to me telepathy reception is always twice as distinct at such times. The latest response to Bar Association invitation indicate that somewhere between 175 and 225 people will make a round on Sunday afternoon early and these will probably be by perhaps 50 or 75 later in the afternoon. This will mean a fairly busy time for Sunday afternoon but I shall not mind since the entertaining of the South Carolina people will not tread hard on the heels of the Bar Association and thus I should be able to enjoy a comparatively quiet evening after first dark and I'm going to try to keep the major part of the ensuing week free

The important thing for me is to have a few days during the week all to myself when I can play the recordings I like best, sip an occasional glass of port, relax in my Confederate gray cherry robe and so a heap of dreaming as I contemplate the heavens and the new moon in the western sky and contemplate the goodness of God in providing the world into which I was born with another human entity so marvelously fashioned for admiration and adoration. I do so hope this is going to be such a happy week all around, and especially in the environs of Lyme.

Today brought me so many different sorts of people, I never did around to trying to cover the triangular parterres in a high wind on first dark. And after that came a couple of secretaries to struggle with the mail which wasn't too interesting. A check from Bootsie Gay came to hand to the amount of five dollars, covering the cost of one picture. I assume, and hope, the balance will eventually be coming through, but I cannot help laughing at the amount sent.

There was a letter from Bob, too, which I am holding out to jot some schedules for the April 27, 28th, 29th and May 1st broadcasts. He mentions the possibility of carrying a reproduction in color of one of the paintings on the front page of the Times Picayune Magazine Section. If that is effected, I shall be astonished, for the article about the Black Swan was the first time a likeness of a lady of color ever cracked the Picayune and now if the handiwork of a lady of color should make the front page, the Picayune world must certainly be said to be going to the dogs.

But I must break off at this point and do some paper chasing in dark in a final attempt to save the vegetables from the frost. How pleasant it is to contemplate the coming week and to keep the telephonic broadcasting a steady stream of hopes for happiness to you throughout

7275

Sunday, Marcy 27th, 1955.

Memorandum:

And so I heard the weather reports from around the nation this morning and from what Columbia had to report about weather in the metropolitan area, I gathered that it was not a day for outings and naturally my thoughts have been wondering how things have been rock along, what, if any plans were being made for celebrating the anniversary and so on, might have been cooking, etc., etc.

Shreveport has been keeping weather records only 84 years and so we don't know much about what went on before then. During these past 84 years, however, there has never been such cold days as those of the 25th, 26th and 27th, with ice on every pot when usually it should be like summer. We have had no rain, however, and for the most part, the skies have been cloudless, with winds blowing constantly from about 10 miles an hour up to 30 mile gusts. It looks as though my parterres of vegetables may have by some miracle survived, but nearly everything else looks cooked to turn. I have never seen such a spectacle as the Chinese magnolia trees present. They were in full leaf when the cold arrived and the green was converted into brown-black over night. Being so large, they all look as though they were dead but I think they will put out new foliage. Of course the butterfly lilies, now up to my knees, were likewise flattened out, but they will come back eventually. The banana stalks will have to be cut to the ground, I suppose, and as this will put them back about three weeks, I suppose there will be no fruit this season. However any of these things revive, one thing is certain, obviously we are heading in for a second Spring in 1955, although I should be surprised, either, if we were denied a phenomenon by having summer unfold abruptly by the time Miss Lee's natal day has arrived.

The wives of the legal lights made their rounds on schedule and it was all very pleasant personally, even though the air was something more than bracing. Celeste, in a gay mood, received in the library and we discovered many of our mutual friends within the group, including Ora, Mildred Cunningham and so on. One very nice but unexpected couple participated in the tour. Just as the cavalcade was about to leave Natchitoches for Melrose, a man and a woman, supposedly in town for the Bar Association meeting, got to



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up with the other cards, and someone called to them to follow in line. They did so and on arriving here, it turned out they were two very lovely people who, traveling from Kansas to New Orleans, had paused in Natchitoches and were viewing that town when they were caught up in the cavalcade and whisked along. They were so charming and everyone so kind to them that they thought themselves in a new kind of paradise of cordiality and we thought ourselves lucky to have thus met, by nobody's intention, such delightful people.

I am writing Bob a letter tonight that will begin something like:

**SOUTH HONORS NEGRO ARTIST**

Be

New Orleans Features Primitives of Louisiana Great Grandmot

and I shall point out to him that since the Supreme Court brings its racial hearings in April, we might call the attention of Life magazine to the Delgado show, suggesting that they use the Hunter story with a slant of news value that regardless of hill billy noise in the South, certain levels of society aren't too prejudiced in Art matters at least

I heard at least a 3rd of the Clifton Fadiman "Conversations" last night, in spite of the interference by other stations with the Chicago let. He had John Mason Brown and Jacques Barzun as guests along with B. Serf. I wonder why I don't care so much for Bennett Serf. Well, anyway each man read off his own list of his ten favorite novels, and some of the discussion, following the reading of the individual titles, was interesting. Among other things I concluded from what I heard was that perhaps our favorite novels may be dated, in that perhaps the book which made the most profound effect upon us in our youth or entertained us most delightfully, would not be likely to do so if re-read in maturity. Somebody had the elder Dumas opus, *Les Trois Mousquetaires*. I was crazy about the book when I read it in childhood but can't decide if I be equally enthralled in maturity. Dostievski's *Brother's Karamazov* appeared on more than one list, I believe. I could subscribe to that, as it most certainly would on one of mine. It seems to me somebody inc. little Marcel's opus but I am not certain and that set me to wondering about the English translation of "*A La Recherche du Temps Perdu*" and why it wasn't called "Re-capturing Yesterdays". I was surprised there was no mention of "*Gone With the Wind*", for Miss Mitchell's tale would most certainly go on the list of my ten favorite novels. The *Magic Mountain* of Thomas Mann and *Tom Sawyer* of Mark Twain were on somebody's list but I never did read Mann or Twain with facility and so they would not appear on mine.

So much for a placid, pleasant week end and I am holding the thought that this entire week may be an unbroken arch of happiness for everything having to do with Lyme.....

7277

Monday, March 28th, 1955.

**Memorandum:**

How nice to find your Tuesday-Wednesday letter in today's post and how much like you to have provided a transcript of the Vaccarini item, which is precisely what Sister Frances Jerome needs for the business she has to hand. I think you on her behalf but I thank you a billion on my own account. I do not need the transcript of the other.

Your mention of the rains of last week, when added to the cold spell your radio mentioned over the week end, suggests that we have been moseying along parallel atmospheric paths of late. Today's radio spoke of 21 inches of snow in Central New York but I'm hoping none of the flakes spiraled as far south as Manhattan. A bright sun today suggested a lovely winter's day in Louisiana although it will not frost tonight, I think, and it would appear the vegetable triangles made it alright, although everything else looks as though knocked silly, but I suppose most of the things will put out new leaves before long and then we can start afresh again.

What I am hoping is that it may rain all during the ensuing week end in this area, not that we need the water particularly but it is said that the entire posse of Wenks will spend Saturday here and I am hoping that the rain, if it arrives, will make sacheting about the garden mighty unpi

I'm so glad you gave me your impression of Bootsie Gay and her resemblance to my neighbor. Their orbits in a way approximate each other, the nearest one on the dumb side, the more remote one dizzy. I telephoned the Natchitoches papers today, asking them to hold up publication of a letter which, on Saturday night, Madam Millspaugh had told me some newspaper man had written about Bootsie's show and which she had sent to her daughter in Natchitoches, asking her to have it printed locally. Heaven knows what the letter may have been about but I suppose "Clemantine Henry's" name appeared in it and while Clemence would probably never hear about the reference, local people might bear down on her forthwith for pictures at just the time Bob will be here and we shall be trying to round up as many canvases as possible before the Delgado exhibition. I think I have succeeded in convincing the Editors that they will do well to hold such copy for a couple of weeks when something more elaborate may be available on the same subject so that the aforesaid item may be dove-tailed with the other material. And, of course, when the new materi



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comes to hand, they will discover that there's no point in running the  
Boatsie ay thing.

And speaking of the forth-coming Delgado business brings up an  
interesting point. A couple of days before Bootsie's show, Ida  
Mazurette sent me a very modest sum of money to cover a couple  
paintings by la Hunter, asking me to send same directly to her  
cousin, Mrs. Grace, of Baton Rouge, --la Grace being a sister of  
Mrs. Vernon Cloutier. What with all of Clemence's things go to New  
Orleans for the Bootsie business, I had some difficulty in tr cking  
down a couple of items which were excellent but which, had not Ida been  
concerned, I should not have sent. But I sent them along regardless,  
and later I learned from Carolyn that when Ida reached the Bootsie show,  
she confessed to Carolyn she was covered with embarrassment because of the  
meager amount she had sent me, in view of Hunter prices being paid at  
the show. And then, in today's post came a letter and a package from  
Evelyn Grace of Baton Rouge, returning the pictures and saying she  
should prefer something more colorful. I was delighted. And I  
accordingly dropped Ida a line, returning her money to her and  
a letter to la Grace, saying that as Clemence's orders were all taken for  
weeks in advance, I shouldn't be able to supply her with others, but  
that she might find something of la Hunter's at the ~~Delgado~~ Delgado  
exhibition that would appeal to her or that she might see something  
on TV in early May that she could select from, as being already painted.

A slight interruption at this point when the telephone rang, Mildred  
Cunningham calling from town to give me an address.

This seems to have introduced a Denhome margin, and that reminds me that  
I heard from that lady today and I'll enclose her letter.

I've been so interested in what the radio has had to speculate on concern  
the Falta papers and their leak to the New York Times, obviously with the tacit  
consent of perhaps both the Secretary of State and Chairman of the Foreign Relations  
Committee. I'm astonished, now that McCarthy is gunning for the President,  
that he doesn't begin braying about more Communists in the White House or rather  
the State Department or both, --that same old tune he used to employ so frequently  
last year.

And so anniversary week gets under way and how happy I am that our  
telepathy works so nicely. And although this letter with have reached your  
hand after the natal day has been celebrated in your immediate surroundings,  
still there is much delight in my heart to know that for little Miss Lee there  
will be a realization all week that the contact of kindred spirits will keep  
right on vibrating.....

0887

7279

Tuesday, March 29th, 1955.

Memorandum:

How pleasantly this birthday week in unrolling at this bend  
of the river and may it be doing as nicely along the Hudson.

There's nothing important to mention as a salient feature to make it  
so but rather just a pleasant, smooth, even temper of Time as it moseys on.

Last night the weather bureau played a trick on all of us farmers  
by saying the cold spell had gone on its way and that moderate temperatures  
would obtain for the next five days at least. But this morning, one  
awoke to a world that was glistening with a coat of frost and there  
was ice in the rain gage and in the bird bath. And so, after covering  
the vegetables on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, I left them all exposed for  
the on-slaught of Jack Frost on Monday. But it would seem as though they  
braced themselves against the unheralded cold snap and they don't  
appear to have been killed, I hope.

Today's post brought the Library of Congress list which I shall enclose  
separate cover. Unless you feel it would be pushing Proust too hard,  
I should like to add a title of "A La Recherche" to this list. If, however  
you feel it would be better to skip this opportunity and append it  
to the next one, that is entirely satisfactory to me. I am not  
certain as to which volume I should like to begin slugging for, but  
I suppose I would be best to ask for the final volume, whose title I  
forget. Perhaps it is "Time Recaptured" or some such. It seems to me  
the one I really want to read next is The Guermentes Way, having much to  
do about the Guermentes set up, and perhaps the marriage of Madame Verdurin  
to the Prince de Guermentes and possibly Gilberte's marriage to Saint Loup.  
I have forgotten in which volume all this appears and besides, and this is  
important, if I have to plug away for another 6 or 8 years to get the next  
recorded, I suppose that by getting the final one recorded next, there may  
be a better chance to get the volumes in between included to complete  
the work.

When the reprint of "Invitation to Learning" comes out, it will pro-  
vide the name of the two or three people who were Dr. Bryson's guests at  
Proust sitting in January, last past, and I shall write personal letters  
to those participants, asking them their respective opinions as to which  
volumes in their opinion should be struggled for in the recordings.  
I am in the midst of reading the Verdurin dinner party at their country place.



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near Balbec and I find that the author did an even better series of thumb-  
nail sketches of the various characters assembled than I had remembered, and  
so I have enjoyed the dinner twice as much as I had hoped.

Mrs. Wood dropped by from town for a few minutes this morning and  
brought me a clipping she thought I would enjoy because it had some mention  
of Dr. Schweitzer in the text. I shall enclose it herewith and you will  
notice that while Dr. Schweitzer is merely mentioned, the article itself is  
devoted to the New Orleans Mellons and their plans for their hospital  
in Haiti about which some mention was made a while back when a letter from  
his wife came to hand.

It was good hearing from Helen in today's post, too. The "C" she  
refers to is Carolyn, of course, and is in response to something I had asked  
her about a while back as to the latter's financial status when the  
announcement of her intention to take a lease on Pirates Alley somehow didn't  
quite jibe with the insolvency which she mentioned at the time as being a  
problem. I think you will like Helen's gay treatment of the religious  
twist given to the spelling of the names of certain Asiatic countries.

Mrs. Stirling sent me a perfectly lovely lady, a Mrs. Nelson, today,  
and when Mrs. Nelson said she was from Wisconsin, I said in jest that  
I couldn't believe such a bundle of culture could come from the same State  
whence comes "that awful man", to which she responded laughingly that  
few people in the other 47 States had an idea of the dreadfulness of having  
to live down the horrors of that horrible maniac.

I have an impulse to write Dora a letter tonight, although I haven't an  
in particular to say. But I find myself confronted with the probability that  
a Melrose letter received at Moncks Corner had probably better be shaped for  
at least three persons rather than a single pair of eyes, and so I had better  
rigged up the thing for an audience rather than a mere casual chat.

An old Louisiana saying is that "in the Spring, Jack Frost never catch  
the pecanes", meaning that the conservative pecane trees, about the last to  
out their leaves, usually find themselves well into Spring before they begin  
shaking out their foliage. But Dr. Smith of the Federal Experiment Station  
Shreveport telephoned J. H. today to say that the week end cold had ruined  
the pecane crop 100 per cent in that area and it is assumed the same may be  
true in this area, for while the cold was 2 or 3 degree less this far South  
still, the trees here, 100 miles nearer the Gulf, were that much more  
advanced. But every year we hear there will be no cotton, no pecanes,  
no beef, etc., but nobody has started passing a tin cup as yet, although I  
had hoped a bumper crop in all departments would secure a new roof for Yucca.  
But the Good Book says there is always seed time and harvest and so we move  
and birthdays are upon us and may everything be as merry at Lyme as it is at

7281

Wednesady, Marcy 30th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Here it is birthday time, and I'm holding the thought that  
even as at this bend of the river, there was an equal amount of sunshine  
and blue sky all around Lyme. The weather has warmed to a pleasant  
72 and although the breezes tend to make it seem a little cooler,  
the temperature has been so pleasant all day and tonight, with the wind  
subsiding, and a nice fat moon riding high in the heavens, the gallery  
giving on the white garden is ever so pleasant and because I  
wanted to drink in the Southern summer sky, using same as a sounding  
board for my messages by mental telepathy, I sat there for  
the past half hour for such a communion, to the accompaniment of  
Strauss waltzes, from 11:30 until midnight, it being about 10  
minutes after that magical hour right now.

The ladies across the fence seem to be catching the spirit of Spring  
and they were as happy as clams at the coffee hour. Celeste told  
me all the Went tribe is to be here on Saturday and that Joe Henry  
is coming for a vacation in June. Not even such news items seemed able  
to depress anybody.

The postman brought me two or three letters, none of which were of  
much interest, although Bob's note, carrying the information that  
one of the Hunter radio broadcasts would be at 11:45 a.m. on May 1st, of  
Columbia's WWL of New Orleans was interesting, for this will enable  
me to suggest that we have WWL going during the Sunday dinner hour on  
that date as we usually dine between 11:30 and 12.

Carolyn telephoned from town where she had spent the night, asking  
if she might come down to get some pictures for Sister Frances Jerome a  
to be here at 3 o'clock where some old friends from Marshall planned  
to pass this way. The friends never showed up but Dr. Rand, Whitefield  
Jack and wife (Frances Rand) and Whit, Jr., home from Washington and Le  
passed this way. Whit, Jr. told me of his 40 dollar prize essay which he  
Leston as its subject. He was taking pictures of Melrose for his brother  
Rand Jack, who is doing an essay on the same subject. We all had  
a nice little visit and Frances asked me if she might bring a flock  
of young matrons, members of the Junior League of Shreveport, down here  
on April 14th, as she will give them a picnic lunch at the camp on  
the same day.



7282

Carolyn's purpose in coming down here, aside from getting some additional pictures, was to spend the night here in order to be in Baton Rouge on the morrow for a conference with Dr. Graves, head of the Welfare Commission or some such State unit, which has charge of State Institutions of a medical, mental and penal nature, such as State hospitals, State prisons, Charity Hospitals and so on. It seems he has been casting about to find somebody of proven merit in the promotional field to head his Public Relations section, and had contacted Carolyn through the TV station in Shreveport, after having turned through one of her scrapbooks which she had accidentally left in the Shreveport office of the TV station. She will drive down to Baton Rouge tomorrow, leaving here about 6:30 or 7 a.m. She says if she decides she wants the job, she will be able to live in New Orleans which I think she would like to do.

I was glad to have an opportunity to talk with Dr. Rand alone for a few moments to find out if he is intimately acquainted with anyone in the Alexandria TV set up. He has one friend who is the majority stock holder and has long known several of the officials in that organization. Tonight, before folding up my beard, I shall drop him a letter, outlining the particulars regarding the WDSU TV broadcast out of New Orleans on May 1st at 1:30 and I have no doubt that the Alexandria station will want to contract for that broadcast.

I didn't ask about what guests were at the Rand camp who remained there while the doctor and the Jacks were here but I assume there must have been some people there, since Frances told me that her mother had Clemence over there with a flock of her pictures. I suppose there will be more guests and less pictures following the May 1st broadcasts and the billboard and other printed advertisements. Did Bob mention in one of his letters or was it on the telephone that he remarked that some big beer concern, having many billboards through the Gulf area will carry reproductions of Hunter canvases, blown up to enormous size, during their summer advertising campaign.

In view of such considerations, it will be my next duty to rig up methods whereby I can prevent the Natchitoches Welfare Office from taking Clemence off their rolls, for her monthly check is likely to do her a lot more good than any fame coming her way, although there is always a chance, of course, that the sum total of pictures sales may outrun the size of the welfare checks, I hope.

So many things to talk about but I had better resist the impulse jump to another page. Birthday time is so pleasant all around the neighborhood in which I find myself. May it be but doubly so right where you are, particularly right where you are in thought.....

7283

Thursday, March 31st, 1955.

Memorandum:

How pleasant the weather has been this birthday week. A suggestion of Spring remains in the air although a few drops of rain have been, too tired with excess natal day celebrating but even if exhaustion has been present, I'm sure it was the ~~at~~ happy sort.

I was so glad to have the day sufficiently quiet in order to do as much as I pleased, with a couple of rare exceptions when some Oregon pilgrims came this way, -- lovely people formerly of Charleston, and during the afternoon the Reverend Wiggins, the Presbyterian preacher from town, and a nice guy, brought some visiting clergyman down, the latter hailing from Canton, Mississippi. Except for these and a small contingent from Lake Charles, I could concentrate pretty much on "must stuff" although I did enjoy seeing the good doctor of Thursday morning and two visitations by the local artist. The latter said she had given a couple of pictures to Lythe yesterday when she was at the camp and as Carolyn had brought the artists some boards, I suppose the latter is up to her hips tonight in swinging her bursh.

As for Carolyn, a TV gentleman of Shreveport, stopped here this morning at 7, picking her up and whisking her off to Baton Rouge in his car. I suppose she will return to Melrose sometime during the night to collapse after a busy day and be up and abroad tomorrow to grab a couple of pictures for Sister Frances Jerome, and thus fly out for Marshall before our week end visitors from Shreveport arrive en masse. I am holding the thought that the rain which we need may be forthcoming and all day long about Saturday so that everything may be wonderfully dreary and boring to the guests.

Although it was a little late last night when I folded up my beard, I turned on the radio regardless and had the good luck to stumble over station re-broadcasting the Oscar award business out of California. I am always interested in these programs which, being but once annually, are bound to have an element of novelty about them, even though I know none of the actors they are talking about and none of the movies being honored. I know not the identity of this year's Master of Ceremonies, but I found him silly and tiresome without being funny, but perhaps that was because I, too, was inclined to be tired, not to mention silly.

Still, in spite of that or those drawbacks, I enjoyed the performance and was a little surprised to discover I was still awake when it was finished.



7284

I was so sleepy last night, I can't remember if I mentioned that Dr. Alban came down from Shreveport to spend the day examining how the local pecan trees fared during the week-end cold. He did a thorough job looking things over, I guess, for he concentrated on it all day and came up with the opinion that only two varieties of pecan trees were adversely touched by Jack Frost's icy fingers, -- the Sly and the Stewart which do not represent half as many in the local orchards. And so the difficulties experienced to the North of us and to the East do not seem to have been present here. From all this one might conclude that since other sections experience a total loss of this year's crop, the price of the merchandise will probably double and thus, even though there be but half a crop, might bring the total up to about equal or a little better of the usual harvest.

Herewith or under separate cover, I shall enclose what is described as the Louisiana Traveler, a publication issued by the Department of Commerce and Industry. I haven't the vaguest notion as to the identity of the writer of the article about Melrose which seems to contain but 2 or 3 errors, so near as I could estimate, although I read it over very hurriedly. For instance, Louis instead of Louis Jr. is given credit for having built the big house, and, I believe, that J. H. rather than the Estate of J. H., Sr., is named as present owner. But such details aren't of any importance to the casual reader, although there are going to be some disappointments. I don't know the part of those who believe what they see in print when they conclude that visitors are welcomed, -- no qualifying clause about "by appointment only".

I was glad Carmen telephoned me today to remind me that I am supposed to receive 50 people from South Louisiana on the morning of April 5th. They will come at 9:30 and we shall have a dab of coffee at the conclusion of the tour. I may have remarked before that Zelma is an excellent cook in everything but the art of making coffee, a beverage which she never indulges in, which seems to make her the exception proving the rule that everyone in Louisiana goes in heavily for said brew. She makes me hot chocolate for my breakfast and thus I get by nicely. One especially pleasant feature of tonight's birthday week celebration has been the opportunity I have had, thanks to a failure of the electricity, is to jot down this memo in the shadows with my fingers glued to the keys but my gaze wandering about the white garden, -- ghostly and lovely in the moonlight and it seems to me that telepathy works wonderfully well under such circumstances.....

7285

Friday, April 1st, 1955.

Memorandum: And so the week of natal day celebrations comes to a close and only a week end remains to be completed. I so whole-heartedly hope it has been a happy week in the neighborhood of Lyme and that the week end may prove so.

I brace myself against the morrow and whatever hurly-burly it may have in store. At the important thing is that the week itself has been happy all around, I hope, and that your week end may be ever so much more peaceful than is likely to be the situation locally.

Carolyn returned rather late last night and the TV man from Shreveport dropped in for a quick glass of port and was then on his way again. It turns out that Dr. Grant who specializes for the State in getting hysterical and over-wrought people back to an even balance is, paradoxically enough, just the type of person who can do this on a big scale but can make nervous wrecks out of everyone who works for him. It all seems so odd but may be explained in part by the fact that his doctor's degree is not based on medical or psychiatric attainments but stems from a doctorate conferred on him for his Biblical attainments. In short, Dr. Grant with this degree of D. D. becomes in reality a great big Fiddle-dee-dee. I had heard enough when it was reported that he orated at the conference, explaining that he wanted anyone working for him to give him 24 hours of the day, 7 days a week of their time and energy. Right then and there I advised in the negative, so far as accepting the State job under him which was proffered.

This morning, Carolyn had to go to town to see about some photographic materials and this afternoon she made use of same, getting pictures, I believe, of tractors stirring up new cotton rows and such like. She had hoped to get some color film of Clemence but the sun wasn't right for the places in front of her house she had in mind. She returned here about 4 and I dictated a letter to the Ford magazine concerning the local artist, stressing the broadcasting broadsides that will be forthcoming and suggesting that what with the agenda of the United States Supreme Court for April, the Hunter show in New Orleans might be pertinent for Ford Times as well as an echo for its readers who might be traveling in the South in subsequent months. As this letter was concluded, Carolyn, to my surprise, mentioned that she was on pleasant terms with the Magazine Editor of the New York Times,



2887

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.2887, 2887, 2887, 2887

whereupon I dictated another letter for that gentleman, thinking he might use somewhat similar material for his publication sometime in May. And then I dictated the basic material for each article and it was time for supper, after which Carolyn headed out for Marshall, and I headed for Yucca for my day on a dozen fronts had been fairly busy.

Blythe had telephoned me at 7 this morning to say that her grandson Washington and Lee University at Lexington, Virginia, had in mind placing one of Clemence's paintings and a copy of the Look magazine for June, 1953, in the Washington and Lee University Library, and asking me if it would be possible to secure a copy of that back number of Look. I shall have to consult my files and see what I can come up with. I told Blythe that the next time she was up this way I should like to discuss a matter with her, assuming she may not be around too soon, for I don't want to let her in on the Hunter business too soon, and yet, since I am engaging her husband to get the Alexandria station rigged up for that TV business, I don't want her to assume correctly that I am holding out on her. I should like to get the stills in black and white of the artist and Bob's color film for the program under way before spilling to or rather too much to Blythe, which is spilling it to the world.

In writing the Times and Ford magazines, I stressed the point that the advance notice being given in the communication regarding the programs planned for the major net works was providing them with an opportunity to bring out appropriate articles almost concurrently with the radio and TV releases and I am hoping that one or the other may welcome the opportunity to get in on the act. I had already written Bob, as I may have mentioned in earlier memos, that Life might be enlisted along certain grounds, but I sent this idea to Bob, feeling that he should be consulted on this point so that he might confer with Li representative in New Orleans and so dove-tail the publicity with a degree of neatness. It would appear that the next month ought to be fairly busy so far as keeping things rocking along smoothly here and the publicity channels free from being gummed up, the one with the others. I am hoping all this activity in behalf of Clemence's fame may work to her advantage. Of course one is never certain how such things will turn out but it seems to me better to remove the bushel from the candle even though a passing breeze may blow it out. Melrose, as one result, of course, will get seeds more visitors and what with Joe Henry coming here in June, my problems in the pilgrim section will undoubtedly be increased tremendously. But these efforts result in making Clemence realize in her 70's some of the fruits of her gifts and her labors, the inconveniences will have been worth while, so far as I am concerned.

But I must fold at this point, roll up my sleeves and get to work. I so hope this has been a pleasant week for little Miss Lee.....

2887

7287

Sunday, April 3rd, 1955.

"....back of 2887, 2887"

.2887, 2887, 2887, 2887

Memorandum:

How nice to find yours of the 29th in Saturday's post.

I rejoice with you that 908 was so cooperative in making the item available at such a fortunate moment and I can well imagine your satisfaction in disposing of all extraneous stuff in ample time and how much giggling was indulged in, as between you and your neighbor, in rigging up the various items in such a fashion as to make their appearance at the appropriate moment seem to casual and according to Hoyle.

It goes without saying that I'm delighted to know that you liked the items reaching your true hand and that you didn't find yourself bogged down with a flock of duplicates.

As for Saturday at this bend of the river, it turned out ever so differently from what I had expected. The day was beautiful and the Shreveport contingent, mother and two children, arrived for breakfast and remained until after supper, - and I don't mind saying such a prolonged stretch was enervating. But fortunately Sister wasn't drunk, which helped, and she wasn't raising particular Hell which was also all to the good since she can wear out the whole place under most favorable circumstances.

By a stroke of good luck, she expressed a wish for some Orinoco banana plants and I devoted the whole morning to dig them, although I performed the act in such a slow motion fashion that I nearly went to sleep the things out of the ground. And then at dinner, I did a brief symposium on the beauty of the banana blossoms among the baby banana plants, and Lo! she suddenly decided she wanted some roots from that department, too. And so I immediately set to work at the same slow motion speed as had taken up my entire morning, finishing just before she was ready to head toward Cloutierville to pick up the doctor and return here for supper and immediately after for home.

At 6 o'clock, I went to the garage to chat with Napoleon Bonaparte about attending to the attic and some electric floor fans in the big house and then returned to Yucca and my desk where I worked for an hour or so when my telephone rang and Celeste, not unlike the fashion of a town crier, called out to me.



7288

announced: --E Lira, yabnu2

"Mr. Carter is dead...."

just like that.

He had taken his wife, Miss Maude, to the drive-in movie, just this side of Natchitoches and while stopping to reach for his fare, as the drove in, he died.

The most arresting bit of news in Saturday's post was the letter from Robina, mentioning that she had heard from Dora, asking her to forward his trunk to Moncks Corner. I assume his letter to Shreveport must have been written after he had reached The Bluff and had found it good, I hope. I should have welcomed a post card from anybody at that bend of the Cooper river but I suppose they all were too busy getting adjusted to knock off more than the "must" stuff and we shall probably be hearing from some of them shortly.

It was good to have Bob's letter giving some notion as to how things are rocking along in preparation for the Delgado Show. I can readily understand that the Picayune, having gone all out on the van Gogh show, is likely to slow up on the Hunter one which follows in the former's footsteps. I also understand Bob's thought that the importance in the May show is to get as many people to see the things at the Museum as possible. I have a feeling, however, that, like many other urban dwellers, he fails to realize that the visitors to the Museum might be increased appreciably in numbers if the publicity were also directed to the attention of people living within, say, 300 miles of New Orleans, for I know a few Baton Rouge, Alexandria and Shreveport people who would make it a point to go to the show if there should be a bit of drum beating in advance. I shall touch on this point when writing him later tonight.

I am sorry to say that some of the Wents are planning to be here on the 16th but I think we shall be able to get about all we want by way of movie events in spite of them. I shall write Mrs. Stirling tonight, suggesting it might be worth the while of her Baton Rouge associates in radio and newspaper work to drag their tape recording machines up here as between now and the end of month, thus enabling them to get both an interview with me and a go-around with Clemence. I gave Mrs. Stirling a number of excellent Hunters from her shop last year and their possession now the nearest shop to the Delgado having any Hunters for public sale which the Baton Rouge papers ought to be able to do something about. And thus a new week begins and a busy one and I rejoice with you once more that so many things went nicely during natal

7289

Monday, April 4th, 1955.

Memorandum:

The weather man promised a shower for this afternoon and clear and cooler weather for the morrow. I didn't see anything of the rain but the sky, overcast with a thin cloud coverage, seems to have kept the thermometer high and I'm hoping that the shower doesn't develop long about 9:30 tomorrow morning when I am expecting 55 pilgrims from South Louisiana.

Plantation activity --or, more precisely, inactivity, was more or less influenced if not governed by the funeral of Napoleon Bonaparte Carter, which began at Melrose and was continued and completed at Montgomery.

I don't remember if I mentioned in last night's memo that I passed by the Carter residence as a gesture of good will and condolence to the widow and the 4 or 5 grown-up children. It was a somewhat futile gesture, as the place was so dimmed by extra shadings on the lamps that I could recognize nobody and there were millions, or or less of hill billies to be recognized, if one had ever known any of them, as I had not.

At breakfast this morning, the clerk remarked that he thought he had sighted the preacher when he first caught sight of me. I told him the truth, to wit, that I had never realized he was present. He explained he was the person standing next to Napoleon Bonaparte Carter, Junior, at the time I was speaking to the latter.

If I hadn't realized it before but it would appear that the hill billies apparently make as much in the nature of a wake as do the people of color. And J. H., never to be out done by anybody in such matters, remained chatty with those present until 5:30 this morning while Napoleon, Jr., having much more sense, it would seem, spent the night at the big house, at J. H.'s invitation.

One of the Baltazar youths was the only person I noticed in the house, and he caught my attention because of his huge frame, the intense aroma of liquor as he passed and the way his feet didn't track straight in the pool of light cast on the floor by an over-shaded floor lamp, the upper part of whose shade had been completely covered by some heavy material, that all light downward. It was Pat who told me, once I met him outside,



7290

who the slightly waving person was. I did not see that any of the hill  
billies were drinking and Zelma remarked this morning that it was  
so shameful that "one of us-es color, --that Balthazar boy", should have  
attended the wake drunk. I might point out that the mulatto aristocrats  
would simply die if they ever heard a negro, such as Zelma, put a Baltha-  
zar in the same category as a negro. And there might be two reasons for them  
to expire because of the point Zelma made:

1st, because of the humiliation they would feel in having one of their own  
mulattoes classed as a negro by a negro, and

secondly, they would probably be so ripping mad at such a classification  
they might take a swing at Zelma, which would automatically demonstrate  
a vast lack of wisdom on their part, for, as you know, Zelma is a big girl  
and I'm told that at the honkey-tonk when anyone gets to cutting up too  
the inebriate is always most particular not to make any passes at  
Zelma who, years ago, demonstrated that she was quite capable of picking  
the strongest man and tossing him off the gallery on his head when the  
impulse to mis-behave unfortunately had got the better of him.

I did not attend the funeral this morning. The cortege left here  
at 9:30, driving to town and on up across Red River at Grand Ecure, then  
over to Clarence and down to Montgomery. J. H. provided a bus  
for the colored folks who wanted to attend, as many of them had known  
Mr. Carter who had so often worked on plantation tractors they drive.

The in-coming mail wasn't much, -- a post card from Kate Perkins  
saying her sister's senility had reached the point wherebye it seems best  
to put her in a hospital. A letter from Bootsie had less news in it  
as all that it contained was a blank piece of paper. I shall be so  
delighted when she has paid the 90 per cent balance due on the invoice  
covering the Hunter show she rigged up.

Mrs. Combs who hasn't been down this way since early December,  
telephoned today to say that her son, now in the Pacific, has a boy heir.  
I wonder what there is about getting into a uniform and preparing to  
spend years in foreign parts that impells so many million youths during  
the past ten years to stir up the Wife and Child Department.  
But Mrs. Combs was very happy about the whole thing and says her  
husband's health is gradually improving for which I am so glad.

I was surprised to hear the Laseur voice tonight in place of that of  
Morrow. I hadn't heard the latter was absenting himself. And now  
I must roll up my sleeves and knock off a dab of Hunter publicity for a  
couple of papers and then return to the Verduran dinner party.....

7291

Tuesday, April 5th, 1955.

Memorandum:  
How nice to find your Thursday-Friday letter in today's  
post.

It goes without saying that I am delighted to know of your blue and  
gold natal day and I'm particularly glad that your associates remembered  
the importance of Wednesday and that you had so many greetings from them  
that you could break bread together with some of them on that day.

And thanks, too, for telling me of the evening program which embraced  
such a fine dinner and entertaining spectacle. In reading your account  
of the pictorial presentation, I smiled to myself as I thought of the  
several mental reactions of those viewing the film in your party and  
how much more certain parts of it, especially in the Crescent City section,  
meant to the guest of honor.

And may I thank you, too, for being so kind as to offer sending  
Dora's data on Clemence. I pray you not to rush into that as probably  
most of the material going into the Picayune or radio or TV hoppers  
are about ready to jell. A little later, however, if there's an  
opportunity for an article for Ford Times, accompanying the color  
pictures of the lady about her cabin and a reproduction of some of  
her paintings, this data might be employed in part, perhaps, although I  
beg you not to dig too much for it since, in an extremity, I can cast  
about for other segments of her extraordinary career that I can use  
as substitute material. I do appreciate your thought so much but assure  
you the parallel particulars will work alright. You have such scant  
opportunity to catch your breath, I should be so much happier  
happier if you would devote such moments to relaxation.

ut just to demonstrate what a contradictory nature I have, I  
turn about, right after urging you not to take on extra work by confess-  
ing to you that, as I promised last autumn, I am running out of the Yucca  
stationary of which I am so fond. Had I realized, as you report in your  
letter, that the Easter Bunny was posting me something within a  
day or so, I might have mentioned Yucca earlier. There is no rush  
about the paper but because I like it so much because in using it,  
I not only think of the stationary itself but primarily of Lyme whence  
it came, I do keep my promise to let you know about its present  
status.

And may I thank you, too, for so generously offering you Hunter re-



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tion of the Chapel. As you will have already noted before this memo reaches you, the Chapel will undoubtedly be represented at the Delgado in the picture of the little sanctuary which I sent Bob and Pat recently and which, as Bob mentioned in a subsequent letter, they are framed on a mat of monk's cloth, which sounds to me as though it might be ever so nice.

Yes, in response to your request that I send along any particulars concerning Miss Nellie as soon as they reach me. I keep my weekly letter moving along steadily and try to drop in a thought or two between times for surely Miss Nellie's is a heavy cross to bear, not to mention that of Maude Eberhardt who is really heroic, I think, too.

telephone interruption and necessity of removing this memo to make a couple addresses....

The estimate of today's number of visitors in the morning group was wrong by about half, as about 50 were expected and about 100 came. They were representatives of certain branches of Parish (County) administrations in South Louisiana, --long on coffee drinking and short of interest in anything outside the coffee cup. ut there are exceptions to all rules perhaps 6 or 8 per cent were wishful about comprehending a little of what they had to see. The balance were coffee drunkards, some of whom never got out of the dining room in the hour they were here while others were like goats, scrambling all over the place, interested in nothing except exploring. I had, in my preliminary remarks of greeting, asked them to confine themselves to the ground floor of the big house. When the cars were ready to leave, at the end of the tour, three people were missing. I found them in the attic. Like a child on the White House lawn at Easter time, o is that egg-rolling and not an egg hunt, I picked up 14 empty coffee cups in different rooms upstairs where they had been casually put down during the ransacking. It is unfortunate but true that in this instance, cooperation began and ended, seemingly, at Yuc

I have missed all radio reports today but I assume Mr. Churchill has resigned, as predicted yesterday. The brief references reported last by radio over his final dinner in Downing Street to the Queen made me want to hear more. It seems so odd that the end of this remarkable man's Premiership should come at a time when the 13 London newspapers aren't being published because of a strike. The moving events will have to be sought out by future historians in the newspapers of other British cities, and, excepting perhaps the Manchester Guardian, the New York Times, I suppose, will supply the best and most complete particulars. Again my thanks for another happy day because of your nice Thursday-Friday letter. Do, I pray you, not worry about inability to write these hectic d Opportunities will present themselves later, and in the mean time, I will stand....

1057

7293

Wednesday, April 6th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Full summer, if all electric fans going full tilt suggest such a season while the Chinese magnolias, persimmons and fig trees stand around, decked in brown-black leaves as reminders of the wintry blasts that were seen but yesterday's.

Bob's letter in this morning's post, as you will note, carries the disappointing news that because of the over-loading of the Picayune with van Gogh data in April, Art will get no space in the magazine section for a number of weeks thereafter. But, in a way, perhaps this is just as well as the other channels spreading the good news of the Delgado exhibition will possibly give a broader, more moderate swell in public interest, thereby avoiding too tremendous an explosion in a single concentration that turn out to be but a flash in the pan.

As for Clemence, herself, she came to see me yesterday, bringing me a "present", meaning she was broke. She was wondering if Miss Carolyn would be having any luck disposing of any of her pictures before this week end, thereby enabling the artist to do a little pre-Easter shopping. I responded by presenting her with a little gift to balance off her own and assured her I felt positive Carolyn would have as good success as she did last time. I find it much better that Clemence thinks somebody else is selling her pictures and as I felt sure Bob's check would come through in the following mail, I told her I would probably be coming to see her on the morrow. And so I cashed Bob's check at the store when it came in today's post and after examining some other pieces of likely looking stuff in the post, hit off across the cotton field, --only to find that Clemence had gone calling on Fugabou's mama. But one of her grandson's was frolicking around and I sent him for her and while I waited, Atlas Remos, Clemence's newest husband, shopped me the fine garden that is beginning to sprout in back of the house at the new chicken coops being contrived out of old lumber at the side of the house toward the gin.

In a few minutes, Clemence came a-jumpin', and was delighted that Carolyn sent her the thirty five dollars which had arrived for pictures in the morning post, as she supposes from Carolyn. And so La Hunter and husband will have



8837

7294

Easter and that's what is important.

Carolyn telephoned from Marshall last night. She said the Murchison conference in Dallas had been fairly successful as he had ordered a few pictures, --I believe these sell, --her photographs, at about \$100.00 throw and he wants her to come back to talk about a photographic mural for his office building within the month. She asked me if I thought she should make a round down this way to get some pictures of Clemence for possible magazine material this week. I replied in the negative, for my thought is that Easter will be a hurly-burly time anyway, so far as I am concerned, thereby preventing me from getting Clemence properly rigged up, and so I suggest she go on straight to New Orleans for some conference or other she has there plan to return here about Wednesday or Thursday. There is method in my madness. If she comes Thursday or Friday, or whenever, she will be inclined to linger on until Saturday, and as I advised her that Bob and his photographer will be coming here on Saturday, I reckon she will be glad to accept my suggestion to remain to lend them a hand, and while additional help in photographing may not be essential, it will be nice, should she be here, to have her meet the plane, either in Alexandria or Natchitoches, thereby enabling me to swing Saturday's business without any assistance from local sources. Celeste, for example, might be entranced to pick up the two gentlemen at their air port in morning, but cards in the afternoon would make it impossible for her to do anything about getting them back, and Saturday afternoons on the plantation being what they are, with so many of the youths on a frolic, it will be much easier to have somebody so cooperative to pick up and take back.

Carolyn said she had heard from Dora, --a mere note, saying that The Bluff beautiful and, --alarmingly enough, that la Storm is the heart and mind of the place. He was talking about Kay when, on the telephone, I asked him when in New Orleans, if he didn't think la Storm a doll. And here again we are confronted by that never ending puzzle as to why bags incline to do such frantic thing about their ages. I suppose this must be, --and come to think of it, it does seem to be so in most cases, that they do so simply because they are bags. For there is la Storm at 84, never failing to charm every body while Kay, so many decades her junior can never make the grade.

I am wondering if I have mentioned within the past few weeks what a wonderful success your feezia bulbs have had this year. Nobody around the Natchitoches has ever seen any and the blue ones bloomed wonderfully this year. I wanted to ask if you found the bulbs in a Manhattan seed house, as I do not find them listed in any of our catalogues here. I suppose that may be one reason why nobody in this area has raised them, and this year they did so well. Madam Reg just about lost her mind over the blue blossoms, and I'm wondering what she would think of the white ones which, it seems to me, are equally lovely. My day wasn't too hectic but I seem tired and so, after doing a little mail, I shall do a dab of philosophy with Omar, in my cherry red Confederate gray and then call a halt on activities.....

8837

7295

Thursday, April 7th, 1955.

Memorandum: Here it is, Holy Thursday, and I was wholly taken aback today when the postman presented me with a package from Lyme that had all the earmarks of Christmas rather than Easter. How may I begin calling down blessings on the head of little Miss Lee. The lovely illuminated manuscript type of greeting card is so precious, sitting here before me on my desk and glistening in the light of my lamp. It's so lovely it's simply Lyme all over again.

And now nice to have such an abundance of the weed against the fully packed days just ahead. I find that when under some pressure, at present, what with stuff to do on several fronts in making preparation for the Delgado business, my nerves find automatic relief and release a quick pull on a cigarette, increasing my quota considerably at such periods. Now I can have a go at them with utter abandon, thanks to this bountiful supply, with never a thought of the need for hesitating because of any shortage. How much more smoothly things will slide along the days ahead. And how thoughtful that provision should have been made against possible fading of this ribbon, which is being put through considerable use these days. And how good it is to know that whenever the need for clearer typing becomes imperative, provision has been made against such a contingency, --and what with the TV script to correct at any moment now, strong imprint of the type will be so helpful on sheets, divided into two parts unevenly, --the visual part of the script being covered at the left, the words to be spoken appearing on the right, so that it is almost imperative to know in a general way, at least, if the two subjects are appearing in proper relation, the one to the other.

And how touching to have the story of "us-es little boy" to hand that I may time and again, as I have already done, turned through the illustrations and to look forward to those days when the in-coming may be brought, I can have the secretaries explore a few pages for me at each sitting. I am so happy to have this volume and I am already envying how many mature white friends are going to want to read portions of it.



7297

Sister Frances Jerome may gum up some of my other labors, as she put in an appearance, unheralded this afternoon, hoping I might give her a hand on Good Friday and perhaps Saturday, to correct her manuscript. Fortunately all the telephones on the Melrose line are not functioning, so therefore appointments do not have to be declined and my time will be the freer. It was so wonderful last week, feeling so gay as I did and all be it was natal week and yet here I am heading into a week end that will last weeks that is, thanks to the same person, an equally happy season.

I had expected Sister Frances Jerome this morning but she got so tired  
up in religious services at St. Augustine's Catholic Church, she didn't make  
it to Yucca until this afternoon. She read me several chapters, and frankly  
they had a very familiar ring. I think she is making a hopelessly bad error



7298

7298

which is being done to avoid making the mulatto population feel the freer. She is using some substitute name for Natchitoches, --I forget the word, and Melrose becomes "riverville" and all the names of the river being changed but the names of Marie Therese and her husband Thomas, are retained. In the first place, no mulatto would ever read the book to

start with, and in the second place, nobody of a scientific turn of mind would be likely to interest himself in a volume in which the identity of the region comes out clothed in substitute names for places and people. I can't imagine any publisher ever knew considering such a manuscript but that may be due solely to my own ignorance, --I hope. She returns tomorrow for further reading from the manuscript. The book or rather the manuscript is important because it contains a flock of particulars never appearing before and these emerge data that should be set forth in print. But I opinion is that this manuscript, wearing a vague and obvious false beard as to the several identities, will have most difficult sledding.

A note from Bob, enclosing the draft of the TV show, came in today. I am putting some finishing touches on it, --all insignificant, --and shall go over it with him next week end after we have taken the local scenes which circumstances such as light, atmosphere, etc., may induce us to alter from our prepared lay-out. Bob and a camera man will fly up to Alexandria on Saturday morning and probably will remain through Sunday morning. The script calls for something along this line: a scene along Cane River, a Cane River road, a cabin, showing sign: "Art Exhibit -- 25 cents -- Thank You". La Hunter will be "discovered" painting on her gallery. There will be close ups of her hands as she paints, and from there on will follow shots taken in New Orleans of various canvases appearing in the show. Mention will be made of her long residence on Melrose and her work for Miss Cammie, with a picture of the big house coming into view, with shots of the library, the "birth certificate" in the dining room floor and so on. A brief sketch of the big house, moving backwards from Louis Metoyer, Jr., the builder of Melrose to his grandma, Marie Therese, builder of the African House, with pictures of some and Clemence appearing in the shots, which will be followed by others of Yucca, front and back, with Hunter canvases on the back gallery and Clemence opening the door to the Chapel and other shots inside, followed by a close up of one of her paintings, taking one back to her cabin at work on her gallery, with the closing scene showing a sign reading "Art Exhibit -- 25 cents -- Thank You". The picture automatically revolves about three great ladies, and while I can't think what's funny about it, I cannot help giggling in my beard. I consider that Lestan dug up one, buried the second and trotted out the third. "No Art Exhibit -- No 25 cents -- No Thank You."

I saw Celeste after she returned from Church mid morning. She said Pat is bringing his girl friends for dinner Sunday. She said her name is Juanita, --that makes a step-mother and prospective wife having the same name, but she didn't know her last name, --Celeste not the girl I'm glad my telephone got fixed even though there be no calls.....

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Easter Night, April 10th, 195

to until to the village... It seems so long since last we chatted on Friday night.

About 9:30, I splashed through a bath and seated myself in my arm chair, intending to finish little Marcel's opus when the telephone rang. It was Carolyn calling from town. She arrived half an hour or so later, an enormous trailer, covered by a leaky canvas, explaining she was taking a lot of duffel to New Orleans with her at break of day on Saturday morning. In a few minutes it started pouring down rain. She put the trailer from the parking place by the store over to the gin under a projecting roof. She departed at dawn on Saturday, the clouds still letting down copious dew. It continued drizzling all day Saturday and until noon today, although only about or rather precisely three inches were registered by my rain gauge. I felt sorry for those who had planned preening their fine feathers on Easter Sunday but the good needed the moisture and it discouraged pilgrims and so I liked it. On Saturday afternoon the Marshall Hicks of New Orleans came to see me, bringing Joel Lawrence with them. Joel is an old friend of Lyle's, is about the size and age of little Miss Alberta and is just as silly as Eddy Dryer or Bootsie Gay. There is a New Orleans bracket of Bohemians which she somehow typifies, more charming and more kindly, I think, than, say, Greenwich Village Bohemians but as light in the head as the latter. Somehow they remind me, the Orleans ones, of a slightly wind-tossed parrot, its feathers never in very good order, gibberly repeating amusing phrases picked up from others and sometimes not knowing, perhaps the mean of the words they toss out. Like the parrot, they seem perfectly content to sit in the sun all day and under the maza all night, pecking at any old sunflower seed anyone might offer them, drinking what is pushed in their direction and smoking what cigarettes may come their reach. I never saw a parrot smoke a cigarette, but that is merely a detail.

It was Joel Lawrence who blacked up her face, put on mourning weeds and carried a huge funeral wreath to present to Lyle when he was making his final stay at the hospital. This is typical of the segment of New Orleans Bohemians. They thought that was terribly funny, even though Lyle was going to get out of his bed again, and probably Lyle liked it, too, but to me such Mardi Gras performance seemed so ridiculous. I opened the door and saw the parrot, a beautiful one, and it seemed so much like the one I had seen in the zoo.



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staged for a man on his death bed seem wonderfully out of line at a time when everyone must be frightfully concerned about the patie and when most patients I have known would prefer a smile and a hand more than a Mardi Gras freak bearing a funeral wreath. But, then, I suppose, there's no accounting for taste. But that is Joel Lawr Frankly, I don't have to see her again.

We were at dinner today across the fence, - J.H., Madam Regard, Leston, Celeste, Juanita (Pat's girl) and Pat. Juan seemed nice but my initial impression was that she was much like Madam General which would certainly be most depressing if courting should metamorphose into matrimony but perhaps my impression was incorrect and perhaps this isn't anything serious in the courting section anyway. I hope so.

Shortly after dinner, Celeste took off with Madam Regard for Mansura where the latter will remain for several days. Celeste re here tomorrow and departs on Tuesday, I believe, with one or more her girl friends for several days in New Orleans to attend the Spring Fiesta. I suppose she will remain as house guest with the Mazurettes. She said she thought she would call on Carolyn, too. As I understand it there will be dancing in the streets, --that's item, and many parades and so on. What poverty does obtain some at the persons of the rich, poor things.

On my return to Yucca this afternoon, I found Sister Frances and she had with her. I hope I am wrong but it impresses me as a sple essay and therefore somewhat general although there are many illus of points, culled from "local authorities". She was naturally pai to learn that she had missed Carolyn but realized that arriving so early and departing so early not to mention the stormy weather, and so understood of course.

I wanted her to know about the impending publicity for Clemen got her to read over some stuff I had knocked out last night and t morning. She volunteered the opinion that she felt instinctively the Delgado Show and all the attendant publicity was such a good s the right direction in matters relating to improving racial relati She said she supposed I knew that there are mulattoes in this regi whisper "Communist" at the mention of Leston's name, feeling as th do that while it is perfectly alright for the mulatto to improve h standing, it is outrageous that anyone should devote time and ener to bothering with the negro. I shall never cease being amazed tha in one bracket of second class citizen can be so heedless, so disd disagreeable to others in the same category but on a lower level t

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Monday, April 11th, 1955.

Memorandum: How nice to find your letter with the Hunter particulars in today's post. And how noble of you to have gone to so much trouble to extract these pages in my behalf. Frankly, I am delighted to have them, for I have been casting about in my mind for the phrase Clemence was always using, with a view to employing it in some of the stuff I am currently doing, but it eluded me utterly. And that, I suppose, was in part due to the fact that the statement was so simple. I believe it should be "I paints by heart."

And how noble are pictures painted by heart, as witness van Gogh. And now that you have been so generous in providing me with the particulars concerning early data on the Hunter career, I shall be so glad to make use of it, blessing you the while in the doing. I can well envision the hurly-burly you have recently be experiencing and again I pray you not to attempt writing when things are so by sires and sevens. You know so well how perfectly I understand and how delighted I am to know that you are taking time out to catch your breath whenever opportunity affords, although there be but scant opportunity for doing just that these days. I suppose Celeste returned from Mansura this afternoon, pre paratory to taking off for the Crescent City on the morrow. Perhaps I shall see her at the coffee hour tomorrow, perhaps not. It really doesn't matter.

The clerk told me that J.H. gambled until 5 o'clock this morning which must have made him exceedingly tired but he gave no evidence of it at supper, and even before breakfast this morning, he had sent me a couple of men to carry out some more cementing against crumbling bricks, etc., and I was astonished he had remembered my request for a few days back, as against the first rain. A little Miss Hunter appeared on my doorstep in mid-morning bringing a present, although I should have put quotes around the word. It was a gay funeral, showing Church in the background and the



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people moseying in the general direction of the graveyard wherein might be seen two figures in black kneeling in prayer on the newly turned earth, along side the yawning grave. The coffin was resting along side and Clemence directed my attention to the face of the corpse staring at you from the coffin, for, as she explained it, "they got the door open on the coffin so you can see the man good before they deposit the body".

I had a couple of boards on which she had painted some other scenes, one a baptism, mostly in blue and white, and I had one of the cement men who is a carpenter of sorts, make me a couple of frames out of some pieces of siding, from an old house taken down last week. Once the house from which these pieces, clapboards, had been painted white, but 50 or 75 years of wind, sun and rain had removed all but a few little flakes of oyster gray specks, the major portions of the boards being a dull gray which seemed to go so nicely with the blue and white of the composition. And the frame is such a purely or rather pure "nigger" contraption that it harmonizes wonderfully with the frame and the frame with the picture.

While I was racing against time in the midst of a tremendously busy morning, I was called to the telephone. It was Norma Campbell, telephoning from Fort Worth where she is visiting momentarily. She said she hadn't heard from me in ages and wanted me to come to spend the summer as her guest in her lovely old adobe house in Santa Fe. Imagine. Well, we talked and we talked and we talked, and all the time I wanted to get on with my labors, for I had cut out several pieces of pie. I wanted to round up before noon. Apparently the widow Campbell didn't mind long distance charges and when she got to talking about how fond Bob was of me, Bob Campbell, I felt sure my gentlemen of color who were assisting me would have got lost before I ever got back to them. Of course you have a clear mental picture of me spending the ensuing summer in New Mexico.

I had hoped to get to hear Ed. Murrow at 6:45 but just as I was "all set" to do just that, some gentleman tapped at my door. He said he was somebody from Dallas and didn't I remember him from three years back, and might he bring his wife and friends from Austin, Texas. I wasn't too entranced but I said alright and I was glad I did for I'm always glad to get indirect news from people like Fanny Ratchford, Bet Smedley, the Marion Gays and so on. The lady from Austin was stunningly dressed, and in spite of that and her charm, I thought she was going to have brains but it turned out I was mistaken. Still, I was interested to learn Austin news from her, including the fact that Betty's husband Judge Smedley, had died a couple of months back. It seems so odd that people who will bother to send elegant Christmas gifts year after year will never bother to drop you a card, not even when their husbands die.

So much for this sitting, and as the Texas delegation lingered un

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Tuesday, April 12th, 1955.

In light of being given the agency for the purpose of the investigation of the case of the missing person, the following is a report of the investigation.

Memorandum: To be prepared by the agency for the purpose of the investigation of the case of the missing person, the following is a report of the investigation. And so the postman brought me a couple of air mail letters from Dora but they remain unopened since all the secretaries apparently got drowned out and never did come up for air, what with another day of rain which probably totaled about 3 inches again. I am so glad we are having all these showers, helping to bring up the rainfall to its normal level. And I'm glad, too, that we have been getting them dumped on us since last Friday night, for one might suppose that five or six days of dampness over this past week end might have pre-supposed clear skies along about this week end when the cameras were scheduled to put in an appearance. I made the most of this afternoon's downpour by devoting myself to writing an article, temporarily styled "Mira at Melrose". It revolves about little Miss Hunter, of course, and after a bit of editing, can probably be attached to local pictures and sent along as a article, should Ford Times, Saturday Evening Post, and such manifest interest in the general subject matter. I dictated a letter of inquiry on this point to Carolyn last week just before she left for Marshall and she got several in the mail on Sunday week ago. She forgot to leave instructions in Marshall to forward out all responses to this address so I suppose we shall not know anything concerning their responses until she returns from her Pirates Alley sojourn early next week. I said to myself, I said to myself,

There is a new wrinkle on the surface of Cane River, caused by an unexpected move by the Department of Conservation, -- a segment of the Government (State) under which the waters of Cane River come under supervision. The Department claims that the myriad manifestations of fish life in the lake are out of balance, too many predatory fish and turtles, preying too heavily on the game fish. And so in a manner somewhat suggestive of using Dr. Guillotine's instrument instead of an aspergillus, the Department is effectively killing all the fish in the river, and when that has been accomplished, the waters will be restocked with untold millions of desirable game fish and the Department, everything will be just dandy. It all sounds like a



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of political tomfoolery to me since the agency being used to kill all the fish seems to have no effect whatsoever on turtles or the larger gars, the chief offenders.

At the spillway, tons of beautiful big fish are thrashing around on the surface of the water and big nets are scooping them up and they are hustled away to be disposed of by gift or by sale to all comers. I know not what the agency for disposing of the fish is called but it is styled a poison, it actually is quite harmless to everything it does not use gills for breathing. Whatever the chemical is, it makes operation of the gills impossible so that the fish, unable to get or through that medium, struggle to the surface of the water in a vain effort to catch their breath, and then fall back and are scooped up, or, if not caught in a net, eventually sink from drowning, --and drop a fish, certainly sounds quaint enough. Of course the fact that neither the turtles and big gars, --some the latter attaining a length of 6 or 7 feet, who constitute the up of the proper balance of piscatorial creatures, is merely a detail. The operations involved in "poisoning" the fish entails a lot of excitement and undoubtedly affords lots of jobs to be handed out by the State politicians and the fish hatcheries throughout the State can work overtime to stir up billions of new fish to replace the ones that are currently being hauled out. None of this seems to make any sense except to the politicians and since they run the show anyway, I suppose that is really all that matters.

I did not see the lady across the fence this morning, as she had already departed for the Crescent City before the coffee hour struck. She did send her servant over with a dab of candy, however, along with the request that I resume my role of Master of the Hounds during her absence.

Just at sunset tonight there was a very curious effect, as viewed from the back gallery. It was still raining at Yuoca but a thin rain in the gray blanket of clouds just at the edge of the horizon, permitted the final rays of the setting sun to send shafts of light horizontal across the countryside and, like a searchlight beam striking the surface of a mirror, giving a glare to the cotton fields stretching beyond the bamboo at the far sides of the white garden, so the hedge itself seemed shot through with a billion sunbeams, glancing up from the watery surface of the inundated fields. It was all very arresting and instinctively I thought how delighted little Miss Lee would have been with Leston. The department, everything will be just as usual.

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Wednesday, April 13th, 1955.

"I am referring, of course, to the enclosures from Doris which I thought you would enjoy reading."

Memorandum:

And now I know just how God felt when He gave Eden to Adam and Eve they had to fiddle it away, determined to sell apples in New Orleans, Pensacola.

I am referring, of course, to the enclosures from Doris which I thought you would enjoy reading.

Last night along about 8:30 my telephone rang. It was Carolyn, calling from Alexandria. She pulled in, together with trailer, about an hour later and took off again this morning for Marshall.

I was glad to have news from both the Segleaus and the Court Yard Candle. Bob is looking forward to Saturday and I am hoping the weather be favorable. It would seem he has cut out more movies to be taken than can possibly be accomplished so perhaps, should the weather be uncooperative, he will get nothing at all.

Carolyn got a mighty disagreeable reception from Bootsie who said she resented me sending around an agent to check up on her. Imagine. She appears to have forgotten that I demurred having any traffic with her to begin with and that had it not been for Carolyn, she never would have received the pictures which Madam Millspaugh asked me as a favor to get to her. And she apparently has forgotten the purpose of her show in the first place, which was to attract prospective customers of candles to her shop, and is complaining that she did all this business the sake of sweet charity and now she isn't being appreciated.

I sent her a letter this morning, recalling her memory to the notation that the unsold pictures of her show would be returned to me, postpaid on 15th but I went on to explain that since my friend, Bob Segleau, was coming this way shortly, I should be glad if she would let him have them to bring to me when he stopped by her place within the next day or so. I sent a copy of the letter to Bob, along with the duplicate invoice, as he had told me to say to me that he would be glad to pick them up.

So much for la Bootsie Gay who reported she had sold the entire collection.

So much for la Bootsie Gay who reported she had sold the entire collection.



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and now is somehow complaining that I "done done her wrong".  
As soon as the movies are finished this week end, I shall acquaint Madam  
Millsbaugh with my distress over her friend's behavior.

I was delighted to find sunshine all over the place today, -  
such a pleasant contrast to yesterday's 2 inches of rain, although I  
liked the latter pretty well, too, but in a different sort of way.

Dr. Rand came this afternoon to see if the Junior League ladies  
could get from the Rand camp over here tomorrow, after they dine at the  
camp. He told him he would send wreckers if any of them got stuck. I  
think there will not be a large number, -- I'm hoping not more than, say,  
or so.

I had Denver, Minneapolis and New Orleans pilgrims today but none of  
were particularly interesting. The Conservation Department showed movie  
the Ocean House just after dinner, the representative breaking bread with  
at noon, along with electrical folks from R. E. A. who are re-wiring al  
poles serving the entire Melrose houses within the confines of the garden.  
Although there were few guests last week, the bill ran over one hundred f  
dollars and J. H. concluded the worn out wires must be leaking some place  
or other and so an entire new wiring was installed.

Clemence came to see me this afternoon. She said she is giving Blyth  
hand at cooking and washing dishes tomorrow during the Junior League lunch.  
It seems Blythe is bringing a couple of servants up from Alexandria and  
Clemence and another local citizen will round out the service. From the  
I learn that Clemence's new husband has not been employed on the plantation  
several months, -- not since cotton picking along in September or October,  
and I suppose she finds herself a bit pinched to maintain her household an  
her husband all at the same time. All local "widow ladies" drawing Welfare  
Old Age pension checks are playing a perpetual game of hide and seek with  
field worker of the Welfare Department, trying to conceal the fact that  
have husbands or helpers or whatever these gentlemen are styled. Life is  
apparently a shade less rugged these days than formerly, say from 1865  
to 1933, but nevertheless there is a definite tendency on the part of Fate  
to make the life of the under-privileged "widow ladies" something of a hur  
burly. yab toun en nistia eodig red yo beqoss en nistia en nistia

Clemence tried to get me to come to see her new painting, -- a revival  
scene, which I am dying to have a look at, but I had appointments and the  
picture was too wet for her to drag through the bamboo.

So things turn at this bend of the river and now I must get at the mat  
and then try to ead a page or two before calling it a day.....

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Thursday, April 14th, 1955.

Memorandum:

A lovely day and quite a busy one. I had four gardeners on my lap at sun up and my entire morning  
was be-fuddled by a non-gardener. Mrs. Gordon Randolph came  
over before 9, bringing me a couple of Mexican pottery statues,  
about the size, as to shape and height, of an elongated wine bottle.  
These were sent by Blythe for the Chapel, treasures she had brought back  
from one of her jaunts below the Rio Grande. Somehow this gift seems  
far cry from the days when she made such strange noises because I  
had contrived a Chapel to the Blessed Martin.

Jaques Bee Randolph also brought an invitation for me to dine with  
the Shreveport Junior League who were being dined at the Rand Camp. It  
is so difficult for you to imagine in which direction my thoughts  
were flying as I sat beneath the cedar in precisely the same spot as  
-- on another occasion. For me, it was all so pleasant and other  
bits of people seemed to be enjoying themselves but nobody could imagine  
my inner delight, the setting was so identical, including the weather.

There were but 12 or 15 people present and C. Hunter, artist  
and scullion, was busy in the culinary department. After dinner, all except Blythe came over here and as everyone  
present was civilized, it all went along very pleasantly.

But it was 4:30 before the guests had departed, giving me a few mom  
to see how the gardening was not progressing without the inspiration of  
my presence and thence to 5 o'clock supper, with only Eugene,  
Frances Henry and I gracing the board. Frances wanted to talk with me  
about getting a teaching job in some foreign clime. She seems to  
favor South America or Egypt, but why the latter, I cannot imagine,  
although she wouldn't mind the Phillipines, just so long as she can  
get far foreign parts. She explained that she is 42 and that if she  
doesn't get a taste of life within the next five years, it will be too la  
As Payne's widow and possessed therefore of over a quarter of a million



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aside from drawing on Melrose annual earnings, it is obvious that if she can't get a "tast of life" with such financial backing, she isn't likely to get anything very tastey in any direction in which she may strike out. How many people we seem to know who have ever but nothing.

I suppose Carolyn will be passing this way on the morrow. I must save a letter from Bootsie Gay about her in this morning's post in which Bootsie sets her out in fine style. I have always felt that it is best to give well balanced people, - at least well balanced people in the social section, - any letters denouncing them so they may read them and for themselves. This provides them with adequate munition whenever the barrage may move from behind their backs to the immediate frontal assault. We had known all along, of course, that Bootsie is obviously a bag and she has very neatly confirmed the point in her letter which I shall send along in a subsequent letter.

I saw Zelma for a few minutes tonight just after supper. She said she had been to the lady doctor this afternoon because she wasn't feeling too well but that the lady doctor wouldn't give her any medicine because she said the only thing that ailed her was the same thing ailing her last year when Zelma consulted her, - tumor, and that she ought to have it removed forthwith. Zelma said that she thought she might go to the hospital within another couple of weeks.

The best thing coming in today's post was the post card from Miss How wonderful she is to have fought back to correspondence which is obviously one of her pleasures in an existence not too over-flowing with other elements of happiness. I am so delighted that she has been able to take up her pen again, in spite of all, for the pleasure of doing her own writing will give her as much joy as receiving letters from her friends.

For the past few nights, I have been sleeping through the Battle of the Wilderness of 1864, in a manner of speaking. The book is Bruce Catton's "Silence at Appomattox", or some such and every time I try reading a page, I make a couple of sentences and hear nothing more until the record is completed and the voice of the reader ceases.

And so my Easter weeks mosey along and tonight I am going to forego the Civil War and return to Dr. Schweitzer and Bach and Lord Chesterfield and do nothing but relax, except in the telepathy section.....

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Friday, April 15th, 1955.

How different from last Friday night is the appearance of the weather, for unlike the endless downpour of Easter week end, tonight the sky is cloudless and the promise for Saturday is of a clear and warm day. This, of course, fits in neatly with the plans for tomorrow's movie program and I am grateful to God that the weather element is obviously so perfect.

Carolyn arrived last night, telephoning from town after I had unfolded up my beard. She had stopped in Shreveport for a brief conference with some TV people concerning some State-wide film they are planning and while the meeting was going on Dr. Grant appeared from Baton Rouge. Carolyn had written him to decline his proffered job with the State. Dr. Grant turned out to be a difficult customer, for while Carolyn had consulted him a week or so back in Baton Rouge with a view of landing the job, she realized after the first five minutes contact with him that it simply would be no go. But Dr. Grant had other notions and in yesterday's meeting simply insisted that he had to have her, asking her to name her conditions, etc., etc., but as she realized his personality was such that it would flatten her out within the first week, she kept right on demurring and he kept right on insisting. Finally somebody through in a suggestion that both parties consider the matter for another 24 hours and thus Dr. Grant was put off and the meeting regarding the initial matter to hand got under way again.

Carolyn thinks she will take this new job which will require... telephone interruption... The new job is something which I doubt if anybody could really turn out but that will be before Carolyn to discover. Movies are to be made of various aspects of the State and a shot of some prominent hotel is to be sandwiched in at proper spaces with a view of drumming up trade for that section of humane endeavor along the way. There are to be 21 of these films and Carolyn's job is to write 21 scripts for same, the whole to be completed within a six month period. Breaking the schedule down, one comes to the conclusion that since there are about 26 weeks in a six month period, about



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one script a week will be required and each will cover subject matter about which she will have to scratch to know anything about before writing. I can't see how this can possibly be achieved, but perhaps some miracle will happen to effect a successful conclusion, and nothing sort of a miracle, it would seem to me, will be required.

I devoted a goodly part of today to working out a schedule for tomorrow's filming program. It is imperative, of course, to get first things first, so far as lights and shadows are concerned, since the whole job is to be accomplished in a single day, -- a tremendous job for making an entire film.

And so I have listed the scenes which can be caught only before noon with a view to having the cameras start turning in their direction as soon as Bob arrives, and from the initial shot on through the program will proceed.

I have not responded to Bootsie's letter, as mentioned in yesterday's memo. I shall wait until Bob has made his report as to how he came out of his struggle with her. I suppose he waited until last minute to do so, and that would be not right when the invoice covering the pictures lapsed. This, of course, would put the encounter just at the time when Bootsie was holding her cocktail party, and if the drinks were good, that ought to stack up well for quite a flurry, I should imagine. I sent Carolyn over to Clemence's this morning to take a couple of stills, and later Clemence came over here for a little round and casually we spoke of Mr. Bob coming to help Carolyn on the morrow with his big camera. Thus, it seems, that the star of the show is all accustomed to the idea that she is going to be photographed on the morrow and the film will accordingly be achieved. I hope, without her ever realizing that she indeed has figured in a movie at all.

Saturday, being a busy day in the big road, with cars flying up and down from morning until night, it is imperative that the pictures shot in the neighborhood of her cabin, so close to the dusty highway, be taken just as early as possible before Bob discovers he is faced with filming a dust bowl in action. And thus we head into a week end. May there be as good a prospect for a summery day in the Lyme area and endless gobs of peace.

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Sunday, April 17th, 1955.

Memorandum:

A busy week end but withal one that seemed wonderfully favored by the Gods, so far as weather, peace and performance may be considered. Saturday's prediction by the Weather Bureau held good, -- all of the family to honor us with visits failed to materialize, leaving the field free for whatever operations one envisioned, without the chance of getting encumbered by notsey Wenks and the like. Bob and his associate, Joe Budde who is said to be an excellent camera man, arrived precisely at 10 a.m. and they departed to catch their plane back to New Orleans at 7 o'clock, and the film had been accomplished.

With the weather so perfect, things were eased along and the fact that we had made out a time schedule, helped, too, for there was no need for waiting on account of advantageous sun slants, since all that had been accomplished in advance and the progression seemed to move along smoothly enough. Bob seemed delighted to be back at Melrose again and although I assume it was his job to do the directing, he seemed quite indifferent to the doings of the camera man, which may be due in part to his trust of the latter's accomplishments and partly to the fact that the time schedule had been so completely worked out. But whatever the reason, attention was paid to the filming process. And this led to one or two elements in the final film itself, I think which will give the thing a slightly odd twist, for Joe Budde had what Clemence described as "a-run-in" me out of ever hole and so cornered the place and "folks sure'll think I know the place good".

I had envisioned Clemence as appearing primarily at her own cabin and in and about Yucca and the Farican House, but the film shows her in a different light. I think I have some details covering the details of our film.



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not only in these situations but also flying in and out of the big house and frolicking around in the gardens at a great rate, all of which will produce, possibly a pleasing effect, but may also be-get some confusion as to where Clemence dwells, more on the Melrose big house side than her cabin. But this is a detail which proper cutting and re-assembling can no doubt correct.

Her work was that of an experienced actress and she stuck with the job from beginning to end. ut, of course, the wonderful thing about all the day's work was the fact that she, herself, the star, never realized she was the central figure in a movie. For the ground work done in advance, preparing her mind for the fact that some gentlemen might come to lend a hand at "striking" some pictures, led her to believe that ordinarily stills were being made of her as she walked about from place to place, did some painting, worshipped in the Chapel and so on. And so everything about her actions were totally unstudied and perfectly natural and thus effects will be achieved, I suppose, that otherwise might have required days to achieve had one been forced to struggle for an absence of self-consciousness, as probably must usually be done when laymen find themselves forced into the role of actors.

The only other person appearing in the film was Lestan who appeared but momentarily, taking a book down from the shelf, sitting down in a chair, and after turning a few pages, glancing up at Grandpere's portrait.

The camera man wanted this shot and although Bob didn't want it, he voiced no other objection that the fact that the script for the film would have to be altered, since I do not appear in it. I know not, when they get to pasting, if the little segment will be inserted or not. Since the thing seems to be 100 per cent Clemence's, I can think of no appropriate reason for putting me in at any point, although, had I been directing the filming, I should have had a close up of Miss Cammie somewhere along the line, when her name is mentioned in the script, and when shots of the garden were being taken, I should have had white people, perhaps a couple or three, strolling off into the uncertain distance, just enough to indicate life in such settings as around the sun dial, the Gradener's Garter garden, just to the west of the big house, etc., etc.

Forgive the dull aspect of this memo, so utterly evoted to Saturday's doings. Still, I thought you might like to have some details covering the doings of our favorite Cane River artist.....

118V

7313

Monday, April 18th, 1955.

Memorandum: I enclose for you the letter I received from Mrs. Walter Parlange. How nice to find your elegant letter with listings in the same envelope, as of Wednesday, the 13th, all of which were here in today's post. You see your wish that they should not arrive until after the hurly-burly of the week end had passed, was realized. So also was your hope that the time of the filming process should be fair, as, indeed, it was, and wonderfully so.

I was impressed by the co-incidence of the Parlange letter coming to hand at the time you be-took yourself to the printer on the Yucca matter. Let us hope the firm will communicate with Madame Parlange shortly and will give her the information regarding the advantage of placing her order for a greater number of sheets in the initial go-round. I have not heard from her and assume she is perhaps awaiting a response to her inquiry from New York before writing me of her success in her undertaking. I can't thin (think) that you may not have her address, but I mention it herewith in case you, yourself, should have occasion to write: Mrs. Walter Parlange, Parlange Plantation, New Roads, Louisiana.

And how sweet of you to have inquired with such speed concerning the freeshias. Yes, Madam Regard loves the blue ones and I think they are lovely, too, although I incline more toward the white as they seem a little more readily grasped through the haze in which I am want to view them. And may I call you blessed for having gone to such pains over the Library of Congress list. I am so indebted to you for having added the additional titles, all of which I find precisely to my choice, too. It is so kind of you to go to all this trouble on behalf of us who will welcome the opportunity of enjoying these items later.

It goes without saying that I was delighted to learn that A. Mauroi A. Dumas appeared on the list. I should so much like to read this item And I'm wondering if the same Pearson, author of the biography of Sir Walter Scott, is the same Pearson who did the biography of G.B.S. I thought the Shaw biography by a man of the same name was splendidly done.



6167

7314

I feel sure you enjoyed the enclosure I put in Sunday's memo, although I didn't refer to it in my letter. I thought Dora's account of la Storm most excellent and somehow he seemed more in the swing of his old time self than in weeks. The fact that he didn't touch on Pensacola or New Orleans made me hope that perhaps The Bluff situation is, --and at how long last, --is beginning to perk. Brother, do I hope that this is true, for poor Dora has not the vaguest notion as to what business life would or would not be like in any urban center and it would seem that the place where he now finds himself, --blasted out with so much effort which he apparently never much favored, eventually mean much to him by way of contentment and much by way of happiness to la Storm.

Yesterday morning it was pleasant to hear the voice of Giles Mills-paugh, saying he had need of some more Town of Hatchitoches plates. As Carolyn was departing for Baton Rouge this morning, I asked her to run them in to town for me which she seemed glad to do and as there was need for some boards for Clemence to paint on, she took care of that at the same time and so all was accomplished in one fell swoop. Carolyn has an appointment in Baton Rouge with a view to signing the contract for the 21 scripts for the television thing the State is doing through commercial channels. I presume I shall not see her much between now and November, for I imagine she will be busy as a bee with such an assignment which she probably cannot possibly fill, since each will require considerable research and there is probably a limit to what can be done in script writing regardless of the amount of energy one may possess.

I was shocked to learn of Dr. Einstein's death but so grateful that he has had as many years as he has in the comfort of Princeton. I always thought his greatness in scientific matters beyond my understanding but I shall always honor him in my heart of his contract with the little school girl who used to visit him after school, getting him to do her arithmetic problems in exchange for jelly beans which she invariably presented. The Universe is beyond me but a man like Dr. Einstein can attain heroic measurements in my estimation and understanding by a handful of jelly beans.

I'm so glad you hear the E. R. Murrow report on the Polio serum. How fitting that this marvelous discovery was announced on F. D. R.'s birthday. Did I mention that the big old grandiflora magnolia by the side gate came through with a blossom at the very top on the same 12th day of April. Somehow it seems so appropriate.....

6167

7315

Tuesday, April 19th, 1955.

Memorandum:

It's so pleasant and so peaceful, with n'er a sigh of a pilgrim and no appointments in the offing before Sunday, although I regret to say that doesn't mean there will be no gavottes before that late date when I receive the New Comer's Club from the college, made up of new members of the faculty who didn't get a chance to make a round in November last past.

The sky remained overcast by a flimsy dab of gauze all day and what with the thermometer in the upper 80's and the earth fairly damp from last week's rain, the moment for planting cotton seems to be ideal. And so every mother's son is engaged in getting the seeds into the ground, --I suppose two or three hundred acres have been attended to within the past couple of days, and if the warmth of the days continues proportionately at night, the rich brown fields will have thin, herring bone stripes of pale green running across them along about Saturday or Sunday.

Two letters from the Bluff in today's post, the enclosure from D. and one not enclosed, hand scrawled by Kay, which, from Dora's letter was probably written just before she took off for California. I shall have to read it later in the week when more experienced readers pass -- way, capable of deciphering her hand.

I am so glad that Dora is going to have this opportunity to be alone with la Storm. I have an idea they will hit it off pretty well together alone and, of course, Kay must be entranced to get away from The Bluff and know that la Storm isn't left alone the

On the home front, one may report the phenomenon of the ladies being at home. I saw them at the coffee hour this morning. One of the reverend fathers came along just as I was leaving and as I had gardeners to lend me a hand at one thing or another, I declined the invitation for another go-round of coffee. The priests



7316

are in the habit of playing cards with the ladies on Tuesday nights and what with all the flying about of late, they must be far behind in their games.

But mention of travel brings one around to the road situation and the Bermuda highway is all ploughed up in preparation for pouring the black top eventually. The highway is being widened several feet on each side and fences are being pushed around and re-set and the dust and excitement of the moment is impressive.

Sometime or other, perhaps it was Saturday, Celeste saw Madam Beaufort in town and the latter inquired after my good health and asked Celeste to tell me she was planning to come down for a long visit with me shortly. From that I assume she has some are to grind since she is long on visits if she wants someone to give her a hand at some or other. She has recently succeeded in making about everybody she knew in town quite cross with her and possibly she wants to come down to blow off steam a bit concerning some of my friends at whom she has probably been throwing bric-a-bats. Or perhaps she has some new notions regarding the scholastic endeavors of her son, poor thing. But, like Miss Briarwood, Beth is forever threatening to do this or that and never gets around to do it so I am not kicking out any red carpets in advance.

Jenny Deblieux Mays, widow of Dr. Mays of Shreveport, has a camp on Cane River, somewhere in the Bermuda area. She had her daughter and a girl companion of the latter down here a couple of weeks back, -- Holy Saturday, I guess it was, when I had other people, -- the Marshall Hickses and so on. I bounced Celeste into the Hicks camp while I gave Jenny and her companions a quick little go-round. A few days later she saw Celeste in town, told her I had been so kind to their party when here, that she was determined to do something real special for me by way of showing her appreciation, concluding her burst of enthusiasm by saying that she just thought she would come down here herself, whisk me off to her camp and take me fishing for as long as I wanted to remain on the lake. How strange are the concepts some people have of Paradise on earth. Celeste delivered the message to me when several people were at her house for coffee, and you can readily imagine how everybody hooped and or whooped and hollered.

The weather is so warm, I find myself sleepy and so I think I shall have a go at Dr. Schweitzer and probably before finishing with his Bac I shall be nodding in the direction of sleep.....

8187

7317

Wednesday, April 20th, 1955.

Memorandum:

The warm, humid, cloudy weather continues and so does cotton planting and construction work on the road.

Pilgrims are few, thank heavens, and will probably grow fewer because of the "restraint of trade" element in the highway, although particulars in the enclosure seem to suggest that the trickle will not peter out completely.

I got vast satisfaction at 5 o'clock this morning but the mere undertaking which inspired me to be astir with the dawn, for in view of the week end of comings and goings and general turmoil, both Yucca and the African House really cried for a thorough going-over and it got it. I am unfailingly impressed by the amount of impediment that can accumulate, seemingly on its own hook, and finding an appropriate storage place is forever a problem.

I have long pondered on what advantage the old store could be used to advantage, -- a gallery, antique shop, etc., but not within my time will it ever be put to such a purpose since nobody could ever find equal space to house all the stuff that is already cluttering it up to no point. Of course it could readily be converted into one of the most celebrated antique shops in Louisiana if one had the time and energy, aside from other things. I must say it has always impressed me when considering how talented are the Henrys for successful enterprises and yet how blind they are to the possibilities of equally lucrative projects right within their grasp.

Although the gallery of the old store projects into the right of way of the new highway survey, I notice the grading machines are edging around it, influenced, no doubt, by recommendations on J. H.'s part. I am holding the thought that the old building may not be demolished for there is a heap of Mr. Belle's plunder in the building and I wouldn't know what to do with it, should demolition sudden start.

I think I didn't mention, speaking of the old store, that Outer Mongolia has a new family bedded down in that building but I have never seen the children. My little gray cat also presented me with three grandchildren this morning, two gray ones and a yellow. The Yucca family tree is growing by leaps and bounds, it would appear.



7318

Today's post didn't contain much of interest, but I send along the Denholme letter regardless, along with the Harris one

I had a telephone call tonight from Miss Simmons who has something to do about the blind. Her home base is in Monroe but she was calling from Natchitoches. She wanted to come to see me on the morrow. She is under the impression she can secure a tape recording machine for me at some advantageous price. My reaction to a tape recording machine is much like the initial resistance of most blind people to the mention of a reading machine. But after one gets used to the latter, it seems puzzling that there ever could have any indifference about it. I suppose I might get used to operating a tape recording outfit, too, but the only ones I have ever seen have many "wheels and reels" that go flying about in such unpredictable ways that off hand I should imagine I could never get the hang of its operation. I gathered from what she had to say about the things that there is some special discount allowed on these contraptions for the blind but however that may be, I'm not rushing into the matter at the present time, what with all the several stew pans I have on the the present moment.

We had two cooks in the kitchen today, and while there were several people for noon dinner, there were but three of us for supper, and two cooks for three people ought to and did succeed in stirring up quite pleasant food.

Zelma is planning to have her tumor removed next week and so Do-wreath-a, --who is Ezra's wife and mother of one of the secretaries, is planning to take over the culinary department for a month during Zelma's absence. Do-wreath-a is a sister of Marine, Log's wife with whom you have exchanged Howdies, I believe.

Another telephone call, as between this paragraph and the above, with someone inviting me to attend some kind of a reception at the college this week end. It seems to be something concerning R.O.T.C., and much brass is to figure in the guest list. It will probably not startle you to learn that I declined with thanks. I can imagine few things more dull than an enormous reception with nothing more to do than sample punch and chit-chat with brass

But the evening jogs along and it seems to me I hear a hot shower calling and what is even sweeter music, the beckoning of a nice tall, frosty glass of Tender Leaf. No reading tonight, --just a tall glass of Tender Leaf, a dab of radio and so to sleep.....

7319

Thursday, April 21st, 1955.

Memorandum:

The hour was 9 a.m. and we were having coffee on the gallery across the fence when, out of a clear sky, Celeste said:

You know, I have thought about it a great deal and I am convinced that little Miss Lee, --I avoid direct quote of the name, --is the sweetest person I ever knew in my whole life. Frances Phelps was telling some of the ladies about her the other day in town and declared she would rather talk with her than any one else she had ever

And so there you are and you will agree, I think, that there is nothing more pleasant in starting off the day than hearing someone voice one's own sentiments.

The day's post contained two or three letters of no particular interest but I shall enclose them regardless, --if I can track them down and that is only a chance, I have had so many irons in the fire today my correspondence section is in a shambles at the moment but I shall probably get it straightened out more or less before folding up my bed

Should I find Carolyn's letter, I shall enclose it although it contains little of especial interest. It does refer to an inactive Sunday, however, and I count that a greater triumph than the over-active Saturday, since Carolyn inclines to be flying from pillar to post most of the time and both for her own good but primarily for my. I insisted on "staying put", during which time, I gave her a thumbnail sketch of life at Melrose as between 1939 and 1948, a picture, I fear, which forced her to re-arrange some of her concepts of life at the bend of the river which she, like everyone else except you, has always supposed to have been one unending highway of peacefulness and delight. Personally, I think it just as well that the people passing this way during those years retain that illusion but I have no objection to those who may do something about Melrose later being made acquainted with occasional glimpses of reality. For the average passer-by sees or at least saw Melrose as an audience might see "Desire Under the Elms" if all the thought scripts were eliminated for those intellectually capable of appreciating Eugene O'Neill's opus would be cheated if only the spoken lines "up front" were delivered and the "thought lines" suppressed.

After trying to be utterly dispassionate about the whole thing,



6187

7320

It just about boils down to this:

The Madam was an heroic figure but in view of all God granted her, she really should have achieved something bigger.

Well, so much for that digression.

I was but completely confused today when a couple of ladies appeared today, explaining that they were from Shreveport, were guests of John and Thelma Kyser at the College and had come down at the request of Mrs. Wenk, a friend of long standing, to paint a picture of the big house, hoping to start it today and perhaps finish it on the morrow. One lady's name was Mrs. Morgan whose husband is a sculptor and runs an art school in Shreveport. Now I like the Kysers, who are civilized people and I find it impossible to harmonize how la Morgan can be a friend both to them and the Wenks. I accordingly gave them a quick go-round and then waved them to a likely spot under the oak where they might paint. Mrs. Morgan mentioned Nina McInnis as a friend and, of course, I never could figure out how Nina could be a friend of Sister's and so I simply chucked the whole confusing mix-up as something beyond my comprehension. There is but one interesting side-light to add: I called Mrs. Morgan's attention to a couple of Hunter canvases and she passed them over with a glance as being not of any interest whatsoever. Sometime between pilgrims and gardeners, I knocked off the last half of an article, Miracle at Melrose, which I sent along to Carolyn in care of General Delivery at Baton Rouge, which seems a poor address for a manuscript of which I had not made a copy. I did it in such a way that it might be reduced in spots, should Ford Times express interest, expanded a bit if Collieres or the Houston Chronicle gave the nod. So many people who read the Houston Chronicle, --Secretary Hobbe's paper, journey from that section of Texas for the sole purpose of visiting Melrose, it would seem as though any story on that subject might be expected to click with the reading public but Editors probably know more about what they want to serve up than the readers and so one never knows how fast the rejection slips will start flying.

The remarkably favorable weather continues, only a little more so. The nights hover around 70 and the days in the lower 90's, with thin cloud coverage that prevents scorching and a gentle breeze to even the humidity a bit. The heavy rains of a week ago last Saturday still keep the sub-soil damp for easy germination of the cotton seeds and the general temperateness of the atmosphere gives the pecan a golden opportunity to do their best just at the time the blossoms and tiny fruit are at flood stage. Tonight's prediction is for cloudy and warm on the morrow. Pin points of star light prick through the gauze of thin clouds and heat lightening away to the North suggests a storm that will never materialize. But I must roll up my sleeves and do some mail and then, with pleasure, flatten out.....

5587

7321

Friday, April 22nd, 1955.

Memorandum:

I invite your attention to the note from Mrs. Holloman. The gentleman she refers to in her letter is the owner of the Alexandria Town Talk. I find her statement interesting in this age of sweetness and light. It so clearly demonstrates just the type of mind one encounters so frequently in people whose educational and financial standing is miles above that of the poor white trash although obviously their attitude in reference to racial matters concerning the negro remains on a dead level with the dumbest of the residents of Tobacco Road.

Naturally, --and I hastened to tell her this on receipt of her letter, it doesn't make the slightest difference to me if the Town Talk carries an announcement of the Hunter show at the Delgado. Actually, the only reason I wrote Mrs. Holloman, telling her of the impending exhibition and TV programs had nothing to do with Clemence or her paintings. The actual reason I wrote is because Mrs. Holloman did a series of three articles about State institutions in the Alexandria neighborhood a year or two back and these, I am told, were considered very good. When I heard that Carolyn might get the job of doing a flock of TV scripts, one or two of which will touch on State institutions, it occurred to me that she might find it advantageous to meet Mrs. Holloman and examine her reports, --hence the letter, and re-establishing the contact with her has been accomplished for Carolyn's convenience, and whether the Alexandria Town Talk wants to print news or not is a matter of utter indifference to me.

The remarkable weather continues, the sunshine filtered by gauze like clouds and the thermometer ranging from 90 degrees until or down to about a 70 degree low. Never was there a more favorable season for cotton planting and more fortunate for pecan germination, and the weather man predicts five more days just like it. Last night, following the prolonged heat lightening, Hatchitoches got a little shower but it only came down as far as Bayou Hachez and Bermuda and so all hands were again planting cotton when the new day dawned. The oddest manifestation of the crazy weather manifestations of this odd season is a row of narcissus, blooming merrily and November and December is usually their appointed time for blossoming.



7322

I was wondering only this morning what ever happened to little Miss Daisey in the DellGarber. It seems like quite a time since last we heard from here. I dashed off a quick note to her, thinking she might be taking an early vacation this year as she has in the past and feeling she might be glad to know about the Delgado business, should she chance to be in the Crescent City in early May.

It is pleasant to report that the big old grandiflora at the side gate which set forth its first blossom at the tip top of the tree on the 12th has begun unfolding additional flowers down to the lower branches. And, it goes without saying, that one result of this convenience is that Yucca, living room boudoir and Chapel are redolent with big bouquets and I find the perfume delicious. One nice thing about having several different types of grandiflora magnolias is the fact that some incline to come into flower earlier than others so that we shall be having plenty of blooms for decoration throughout several of the succeeding months.

On the 21st of March, Jack Frost nipped a lot of the tender young buds on the various cape jessamine bushes but even so we shall have merely hundreds of blossoms this year instead of thousands. They will probably come into flower about the end of the first week in May and after that, magnolias will vie with cape jessamine for first place all over the place at Yucca.

Mrs. Morgan, the Shreveport painter and her painter companion, arrived at 9 this morning to continue their efforts on the big house. Mrs. Wood of Hatchitoches had telephoned me earlier to ask if she might consult with me on some problem regarding her sons, currently in college, and she arrived in time for the coffee hour. Mrs. Wood is the type who has a mind like a brook that constantly bubbles but never brings much by way of volume to bear on things. She cultivates me because she thinks I am important which just goes to prove how fickle she can really be. As she has tried to paint the big house, she was interested in the work of Mr. Morgan and company. In the afternoon, Clemence came by, bringing a picture of a revival she had done for Bob at his request. Packing up anything for shipment is quite beyond Clemence and so I usually take care of that for her. I took her to see the ladies at work under the big oak. But they had scant time for her and she was delighted when I invited her to return to Yucca with me. And so, what with a half dozen gardeners to contend with and various little odds and ends, this week end beings or the week comes to a close. May there be vast pools of peace over Lyme in the days immediately ahead.....

7323

Sunday, April 24th, 1955.

Memorandum:

The wonderful weather continues and cotton, like banana and other plants, is just a-jumpin'.

So was Celeste at dinner, but that could scarcely be styled a seasonal phenomenon.

She had been complaining last week that people sometimes stopped at her door, worrying her about asking if they might visit Melrose. I told J. H. I had a No Admittance sign I would tack on the cattle gap on Sunday morning and take down Sunday evening so that the lady would be freed from making any contributions to society during the Sabbath. He thought the idea might please her but he wasn't sure. I tacked it up this morning. At noon she was in a tizzy. "Something simply has to be done, --it's so outrageous that people owning private property have to have a sign on their gate."

Damned if you do and damned if you don't, it would seem.

The sign will remain down from now on until she asks me to put it back.

Blythe Rand and her sister from Dallas came Saturday morning. They were having Miss Myra, Mary Lambdin, Joe Evans and so other for lunch. I had appointments so I couldn't go over and their schedule ran so far behind, and as the Hachez contingent had appointments in Mississippi, they didn't get to drop by here.

Blythe wanted to tell me Dr. Rand is entertaining their brand of Garden Club on May 18th. He will give a symposium on the various varieties of grandiflora magnolia. They wanted me to come. I shall be interested to learn something about a subject about which I know nothing but should like to learn something. She asked if they might get specimens of the various varieties from Melrose for the lecture. They might. I shall have another Alexandria Garden Club on the 4th but shall like the one on the 18th better.

Hatchitoches doesn't know it but I am about to cause an earthquake in that sedate community. I have decided that



7324

the elegant gallery in the splendid Fine Arts building at the College should have a one man exhibition of Hunter canvases. You may recall how the whole town rocked when it was learned that a Shakespearean company was to present a play there 2 or 3 years back when it was discovered in advance that two members of the company, cast in the role of Moors, were of Ethiopian extraction, and how the Bard of Avon was ruled out and Shakespeare was denied presentation.

Knowing this, I gird up my loins with glee for the on-coming assault of my own making and if I come out the worse for wear, I can blame nobody but myself. But I think I shall win and I shall bend every effort to that end. Every hammer blow at the ridiculous race barrier is a strike in the right direction and I am delighted at this opportunity to give a blow against ignorance and intolerance.

One very nice line I shall use in the publicity will concern the pleasing paradox and parallel that Miss Cammie graduated from the college in 1891 while in 1955 her untutored ex-laundress at the age of 72 will appear in the same institution as the dominant figure in the one man show.

I have already requested several people owning pictures of Clemence's in town if they would care to loan their canvases. They would. Ora says she will stand behind me 100 percent and she has some fine examples of the black lady's brush. I know I can count on the lady doctor, too, and no doubt Mrs. Coombs and others. I should like to have about 25 examples of the artist's works and have each carry a card, giving the name of the owner, as well as the title of the picture. Many of the owners are of the bluejay variety who will be chattering endlessly if their canvas is accepted and that will spread the news the farther and increase the number of patrons. I should like to stress the fact in the publicity that the show is made up exclusively of privately own pictures belonging to people in Natchitoches Parish. I find it fine that the Delgado Show will honor Clemence but I shall be even more pleased if I can "bust through" the local wall of prejudice and make the list of owners lending items proclaim that the artist of color is honored in her own Parish. Less energetic or busier people wouldn't be bothered by the labor involved and more timid souls would collapse at the mere prospect of the fury that will break about the head of the sponsor but, as you know, few people would consider me as having anything to do and when it comes to jumping into a racial fight, I can think of nothing more stimulating.

I telephoned F. S. Willard who was enthralled at the idea and offered me her several Hunter canvases, but I'm trying to limit the number of items loaned to about 1 per person so that the list of sponsors may be the greater....I had the New Comer's Club this afternoon and an equal number of other people and although sleepy, I think I shall keep awake for Meet the Press.....

7325

Monday, April 25th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Celeste gave me the attached clippings, each from a Sunday, April 24th, 1955 date line, the smaller one coming from the Times Picayune, the longer one from The Shreveport Times.

The white garden is so pretty tonight, hiu would love it. The ribbon grass, or may I say Gardener's Garter, emerges a couple of feet high like snowy foam around the ghostly white of the great sun dial and the waning moon, moving Northward in its summer course, touches the big flat dark magnolia leaves with silver, although the moon herself is amazingly orange tonight, for the air is velevty with powdered earth particles, which have been sifting across fields and gardens from the big machines working on the Bermuda Road.

It was good to have Dora's letter. I was glad to be reminded of our nocturnal walks to her cabin in days gone bye. I remember the grandchildren twisting and fiddling around on the rungs of the chair in which Clemence sat while painting by the light of the kerosene lamp. And I remember so vividly how black Manuel's bare arm looked, resting on the white sheet and how much like a great snowdrop the gardenia looked in his hand.

Somehow I gathered from Dora's letter that things are rocking along alright at The Bluff. I feel so happy about this for his sake. Somehow he almost seems like one of my children while Clemence, at 72, seems like another, and the parent is the happier because the children seem to be so happy at the moment.

Clemence came to see me for a few minutes today. I find these contacts particularly precious these last few days before the Delgado swings wide its doors and the press, radio and television elevate her to a fame no other colored woman in her humble circumstances has ever attained in the field of painting. For after next Sunday, of course, she will always be held in unique esteem by the members of her race in general and by civilized people of other races who must accord her first place in the field of Primitive Art, thus far attained by a negress. I doubt very much if she could comprehend what all the impending publicity signifies and because she couldn't possibly envision her own funeral she probably will never realize that when she is finally called to her Great Reward, her obituaries



7326

will the more neatly coincide with the average negro's concept of an elaborate death notice than any other woman of her race in Louisiana.

Just before she passed this way for a little chat this afternoon, Charles Cunningham telephoned me. He said he had received the notice I had sent him to be run in this week's issue of the Natchitoches Times. He said he thought he would borrow one of Ora's original paintings and reproduce it with the notice, if time permitted him to get it to the engraver before press time. He said he had seen J. H. at the Club or a party or some place recently and had asked him about Clemence's painting but, he continued:

"You know J. H., --too busy about other matters, and he said there was nothing to it....."

In view of the attitude of the Alexandria Town Talk about not publishing pictures having to do with the negro race, it is heartening to know that Charles voluntarily wants to publish something. I didn't say I had a glossy print of one of her things, for, frankly, I hoped he might not be able to get the photograph of Ora's original engraved in time for this week's issue since I might cut ice to better advantage if it should appear in a later issue when the show at the college is unveiled. But I said nothing about my efforts being exerted in that direction, since some slip-up might side track it and if so, it would then have been better to have had the reproduction concerning the Delgado.

Charles said in his telephone conversation what I shall be hearing so many people say after Sunday:

"You know, I have been thinking I should so much like to have one of Clemence's originals in my home....."

I think I mentioned that Clemence and I have worked out a system whereby her Old Age Pension check will not be voided by possible sales. She is to sell pictures directly to everyone she knows on whom she can count and everyone else, including Madam Beaufort, will be told that I have purchased everything she has painted lately and that they will have to see me. Thus the story will soon be noised about that I am a re-incarnation of old Simon Legree, taking all her pictures and giving her nothing while Clemence and I will be laughing up our sleeves at their concept of my chicanery.

I fear this is a mighty dull letter. Forgive me. I shall try to do better on the morrow. And now Dr. Schweitzer and I are going out on the gallery for a serenade to the mocking bird in the old white crepe myrtle, our thoughts traveling swiftly

7327

*Anne*  
Tuesday, May 26th, 1955.

Memorandum:

How nice to find the sturdy, fat package awaiting me at the Post Office this morning.

And how can I say thanks to little Miss Lee for having once more provided me with so much happiness that will be employed every day throughout the year, giving me so much happiness in the thought of its creator and whence it came, and in full knowledge, as has so often been expressed in in-coming letters, of the delight and admiration the creation has evoked.

Poor Paula Farlangé.....she really don't know what she is missing. Or, perhaps she does.

Be that as it may, the Yucca stationary came through in perfect order and is the delight of my soul. I had thought I had figured pretty closely as to when it would run out but no sooner had I set aside the few remaining sheets for special occasions, it seemed as though a bevy of special letters were to be written and I began wading in deeper than I had anticipated. Oddly enough, I remembered one letter I simply had to knock off hurriedly just as the postman was scheduled to appear and although I didn't like the idea at all, I did lay hold on the last sheet of my beloved correspondence paper and folded it hurriedly but with regret into an envelope and dashed off to the post office. You may therefore readily imagine with what infinite pleasure I lifted the package handed to me, realizing instinctively that once again for the billionth time, Lyme had spread blessings of happiness on Melrose.

For some reason which isn't clear to me or, probably to them, either, my secretaries, who usually come in the late afternoon or early evening, all appeared at noon today. And so I was not surprised, after reading Frances Rand Jack's letter, that the Shreveport Times should call me this afternoon, asking for an appointment on Monday, May 2nd, for their feature reporter, Margaret MacDonald.

This will throw the Shreveport Times article into the



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Sunday paper of May 8th, so that with the Hatchitoches papers coming out on Thursday of this week, the Times Picayune on May 1st, the reverberations ought to have as ~~pr~~ prolonged echo in Louisiana as could have been hoped for.

The Shreveport Times doesn't know it, of course, but Monday, May 2nd, is about the worse time anyone could hope for, so far as anyone who is on Old Age Pension is concerned, for the monthly check will arrive on that day and I shall have to put an anchor on Clemence to keep her from flying off to Cloutierville or some such place.

She came to see me today, rather early this morning, bringing me a baptisin' she had done for Ora. I laughed to myself without cracking a smile outwardly when I took one good look at it, for just as the artist had once gone Theodore Rousseau on us without realizing it, so, in the picture Ora had ordered, she had almost gone Poussin on us in a whimsical sort of way. What had happened was this: - she had used a rather long, narrow board, --beaver board, - and using it horizontally, she had painted the church at the extreme right, "candidates" in white robes, accompanied by deacons in black moving across the center of the picture to the left. The thing would have been elegant, had she stopped just there or with the figures in the river in the lower right hand corner, just their heads and shoulders emerging about the water of the river. But, as though suddenly siezed by a dab of playfulness, she had suddenly decided to paint a high whill in the background atop which, and bigger than the candidates, she had placed three or four colored ladies, each protecting themselves from the sun's rays, by gay parasols. But somehow only the top of the hill showed, and as the sides never did come down to the ground, there sit these gay, be-parasoled ladies, slap in the middle of the picture and observing the baptisin' doin's, with no apparant connection with terre firma, and producing an effect so much like Poussin's landscapes with gods and goddesses floating along on clouds that I couldn't wait until Clemence had departed and I could really take a real good gander at the creation and giggle a bit in my beard.

Our marvelous weather continues and so do the clouds of dust from the Bermuda Road. Pilgrims continue, too, but I suppose their number is small in contrast to what may be expected in mid May. But fair weather or not, pilgrims or not, correspondence will jog along on an even keel and my heart is the happier for the inspiration the stationary brings me direct from Lyme....

7329

Wednesday, April 27th, 1955.

Memorandum:

The weather continues warm and cloudy with a promise of widely schattered showers which never arrive. A little drizzle wouldn't do any harm but neither are we greatly in need of moisture as yet, and we are bound to have some showers in May.

On Sunday, May 8th, in the main gallery of the Fine Arts Building at Northwestern State College, the paintings of little Miss Hunter will go on exhibition in a show ~~of~~ all of her own.

The business was signed and sealed this morning and now all that remains to be done is to regret that the Delgado show will be displaying some of her finer work at the same time, so that the Hatchitoches assortment will have to do without some of her best.

It is fortunate, of course, that the Shreveport Times feature article will appear on the same day that the college show opens, for that paper has a wide circulation in central and North Louisiana so that the publicity attending the local exhibition will be of the fullest.

Of hand, I should imagine that no Louisiana artist ever had such complete coverage for her work and with two shows going both at the same time.

She came to see me today and while we chatted, it occured to me that it might be nice for little Miss Lee to have a small sketch of any old description, on a heavy paper or cardboard that would readily bend so that it might be inserted in her scrapbook sometime during the month when the shows are on, since there seems to be so much endless talk in the Lestau memos these days concerning the artist. And so she said she would make me a sketch tonight or tomorrow and thus I shall be able to get it into the mail within a day or so. Knowing her as I do, she will probably round up a piece of wrapping paper or some such to make the sketch on, but my thought was that something small that would fit into a scrapbook might be to the point.



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Just as I turned this page, the telephone rang and from the conversation, I found myself giggling in my beard as I recalled that old line:

"Niggers are so wonderful!"

I think I told you Zelma went to the Shreveport hospital on Sunday for a tumor operation. Before she left, I told her she might use my telephone number, either for her own calls or that of her friends, should she wish to communicate with anybody. It seems she took me at my word and gave my number of the mother of James' wife, --James being the twin of Little King, and James is usually known as Big Sir.

Well, anho, James' mother-in-law called to give a particular message to Mr. Puny, who is Zelma's husband. I told her I would try to hunt up Puny later tonight. And then came the wonderful part, for she referred to the wife of James by her first name, which I had never heard, and, as I go to write it, I realize I don't know how to spell it. But perhaps you will gather how it should be written when I tell you it is identical with the name of that Hawaiian musical instrument, --Ukelele. Never in my life did I know of a child getting saddled up with such a handle. And now I am unhappy because I don't know the girl's name before her marriage. I certainly hope it is more musical than her married one, --Mrs. Ukelele Solomon.

But I had better begin rolling up my sleeves and getting at the mail. And I mustn't forget to drop Hodding Carter a line, asking him to pass along the good word to Hodding, Jr., at Princeton, regarding the Delgado and Northwestern Shows, since both father and son were delighted with the primitives they saw while here a year or so ago.

Celeste says that J. H. doesn't seem to be able to get enough of the radishes from the triangle garden and so I planted more today so there will be some fresh small ones 4 or 5 weeks hence when the present supply is exhausted. I also prepared ground for a couple of dozen tomato and belle pepper plants which I like to raise for the convenience of grabbing a fresh one from the plant whenever I feel the impulse for such things, especially along about bed time which is certainly an odd hour for such things.

I have a couple of pictures to frame before folding up my beard, too, for I should like to send them in to town on the morrow, if convenient, although the show is a week off. And so things turn, and so I turn to my Yucca stationary and love it.....

7331

Thursday, April 28th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Our remarkable weather continues and every day, thanks to some extra sprinkling, the triangular garden beds continue to yield more provender for the two tables on opposite sides of the fence.

I set out more belle peppers, tomatoes and egg plant in semi-circles inside the banana hedge, running from the corners of Yucca to the big pot. I still think I would like going out and plucking a belle pepper or a tomato on occasion but now I find my interest centers primarily on the egg plants, for I love their coloring and if I am lucky in bringing forth any, I shall never pick them, they will look so pretty against the lovely light green of the banana plants.

A note from Carolyn in today's post arrived at 9 and was un-read when she telephoned at 10, saying she might make a round tonight as she was scheduled for conferences in Alexandria tomorrow. Her letter was still unread when she called at 12:30 to say conferences in Baton Rouge would keep her there on Friday. She said she might make it on Sunday. I recommended that she spend Sunday in New Orleans for the opening of the Delgado and try to make a round up this way later when the college show was on. On second thought, that idea seemed better to her, too. She said she was sending me a duplicate of the Micaele at Melrose story which I had sent her in the rough, suggesting she put it together. She also said she would write to somebody she knows in Reader's Digest as I had expressed the thought that that publication might be interested in the story, thinking it might fit in along with some of their "My Favorite Character" sections.

And speaking of Baton Rouge, J. H. and Celeste have been invited to dine with the Governor and Mrs. Kenon at the Executive Mansion tomorrow. There was an enormous scene at the post office this morning when a new dress she had ordered for tomorrow's bread breaking failed to arrive. I don't know how she thought either J. H. or the clerk could pull it out of the mail pouch in which it did not arrive, but that seemed to be the general idea, --that they should.

Ora came down this afternoon and took back a car load of



1887

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Hunter paintings for the Northwestern Show. Oddly enough, the one I had pointed to with greatest pride while she was here, was left behind, --The Blue Baptisin'. I shall send it in by somebody on the morrow.

I contributed several of my own, -- I suppose about half a dozen, all framed, and about a dozen belonging to Mr. Pipes and me jointly. They represented creations from a dozen years back and one that was completed only about 10 minutes before Ora arrived, and made a wonderfully diverse assortment of scenes of Cane River life, flower studies and so on.

I told Clemence I was going to try to get a picture of one of her Baptisin's in the newspaper this week and she thought that might make some people interested although she is a little frightened about her paintings causing a check reduction in the Old Age Pension section but I assured her that would be alright. She said she was telling the Welfare field worker that Mr. Pipes and I helped her when Manuel was ailing and dying and that she was giving all her pictures to me and, according to my agents in town, word is already flying around that I am stealing all her work and that she isn't getting a cent. Both the artist and I liked that one.

My second hand agents in town told Celeste yesterday and she told me that Dan's ex-wife is planning to have another baby in August. I suppose the divorce was a couple of years back. Of course the ex-husband is said to spend much time with her in Alexandria but in view of the adventure I had with her last autumn or whenever, I cannot help wondering if he knows or could possibly guess the father of the impending child.

Puny had to go to see the lady doctor today and brought back the enclosed note. I am so glad she is going to be in New Orleans for the Delgado business, and doubly so as she has a nice collection of her own.

As the thermometer attains the upper 80's and lower 90's daily, the Tender Leaf section is working over time and my ice bucket and the "bourdon" are working over time. What with the moon being so pretty tonight and the air so velvety, I'm going to knock off my mail fairly early and have a little music, to the tinkling of ice cubes, hard by St. Giggins and just try to guess in which direction the telepathy department will be working.....

1887

7333

Friday, April 29th, 1955.

Memorandum:

How fast this month seems to have run out, and still at our perfect weather, --ever since Easter,--continues to hold.

In the same post with this letter goes a package into which I placed some clippings from some time back, covering the inauguration of John Kyser as President of the local college. These may be of no interest, --I, myself, haven't read them, but I believe they include a picture or two of John and his wife, Thelma, and as I speak of them occasionally, I thought you might be interested in their likenesses before discarding them.

As I might have expected, the local artist did the unexpected and placed the little sketch I requested, not on paper but on what appears to be the top of an old shoe box. But perhaps it is sufficiently supple so that it will fit into a scrapbook regardless. The sketch is casual enough but I thought it might be nice to have something from her brush at just the time she is emerging onto a larger stage.

I folded up a piece of paper in the top of the box, and by thinking you might find it more convenient to wrap up the item that to carry it in the box, although the latter isn't large. It just occurs to me, however, that I failed to include any string with the paper but perhaps you can use the same string that is around the outer wrapping.

A letter from Bob in today's post advises that the WWL broadcast which was scheduled for Sunday, May 1st, was moved up to Thursday and since his letter arrived on Friday, it would appear that the information is as useless as last year's bird's nest.

Apparently the film turned out nicely and the Louisiana stations have been contacted regarding its telecast. I hope I learn that schedule 24 hours in advance rather than after the performance has been presented.

Well, the week-end comes and may there be endless peace of mind...



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The Natchitoches Times came in this morning just before the postman's departure and so I hurriedly tore out the whole page on which I saw a Baptisin' reproduced although I imagine there was but a brief article about the Show.

Carmen Breazeale had written a piece for the other Natchitoches paper, The Enterprise, - but the Editor, who can't bear to hear the word, Negro, spoken, threw it out. Carmen says she telephoned the Enterprise office and talked with some other person connected with the paper who rescued the piece from the discard and she will send me a copy which I shall, of course, send along to you. How strange all this is going to sound a hundred years hence when readers will try to imagine papers like the Alexandria Town Talk and the Natchitoches Enterprise refusing to carry an article simply on the grounds that it has to do with a person of color, --and, if you don't mind, a person of color who is lending more cultural laurels to Central Louisiana than both the papers combined.

I did a dab of baby sitting across the fence this evening. J. H. and Celeste planned to return from Baton Rouge "early" which seems to be a somewhat elastic term. On my return, it was pleasant walking slowly, the moon is so mellow, the scent of the lilies and magnolias so heavy in the garden.

It's beginning to appear that I shall never finish fighting General Grant's campaigns and so wind up the Civil War as portrayed by Bruce Catton in his "Stillness at Appomatar". The book is well done with a wealth of research being evident, but I read but a few paragraphs and my head starts nodding and so I simply turn off the war until the following night, and one never gets anywhere by turning it off daily after only a few rounds.

I mustn't forget to speak of something Ora mentioned yesterday. Her house servant is one of the Metoyers, formerly of this area and occasionally the servant secures another ex-Cane River mulatto gal to assist with labors when things get pretty busy at the Williams household. When Ora asked her servant the name of her friend, she said she is called Celia Ah-don. The Celia didn't seem so odd but the Ah-don was new. Later, when the girl was lending a hand at some domestic duties, she explained to Ora that there are two cousins in her family, about the same age, named Celia, and the other one is just called Celia and she is called Celia Ah-don because when she started working in town, she didn't like to do anything much, and was accustomed to say, "I don't" to everything, hence in mulatto language, it was but a matter of moments before she became Celia Ah-don. Isn't that silly.

Well, the week-end cometheth and may there be endless peace at Lyme..

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7335

Sunday, May 1st, 1955.

Memorandum:

A lovely week end, with the marvelous weather still holding, not to mention the persistence of clouds of dust from the ploughed Bermuda road.

I have not seen today's Times Picayune but shall either leave this envelope open, in hopes of receiving the review before post time in the morning or shall enclose the same under separate cover when it comes to hand.

Across the fence, everything seems to be more or less lovely. As you may suspect, happiness in that quarter stems from the prospect of going somewhere and if dancing can be tossed in as an added attraction, nothing this side of Paradise can present a more entrancing avenue.

And so it was I learned today that Celeste will not be able to attend the opening of the Northwestern show next Sunday as she will be away, for a change. She will take Madam Regard to Mansura for a few days while Celeste travels on Southward, to Baton Rouge, perhaps, or some such place where some Fraternity to which her nephew belongs is having a dance, and one good jitter-bug in the offing can supply ample excuse for a several day's jaunt in the big road. I have been invited to dine at the home of the President of the college on the evening of the reception but as I am not much on dining out and as six other invitations to supper have already come my way, I have declined. But nobody has invited me to do any jitter-bugging and so you may well imagine how depressed I am bound to feel all the way around. Of course the mere fact that the most unusual thing in the field of Art is happening at the college, --so far as Central Louisiana's history goes, is but a detail, and surely nothing so prosaic as Art and Society and what they have to offer can hope to cut any ice against an opportunity to swing out.



7336

Before I forget it, I must fail to mention that one little wrinkle in the Governor's luncheon the other day was to be noted. It seems that chicken and ham were the big pieces of resistance which probably went along readily enough with the Kennons who are, I suppose, Methodists or Baptists. But Celeste is a Catholic, of course, and Friday is Friday, of course, and so she ate chicken or ham or both, of course. And that was that.

But with South Louisiana being so heavily Catholic, --the Kennons are North Louisiana, -- Minden or some such place, --it would seem as though the staff at the Mansion, in preparing official dinners, would have given a thought to the fish section.

And yet, again, I find that I had almost neglected to mention another cause for happiness across the fence. Both ladies plan to do some traveling, for a change, next month. It seems that two of Madam Regard's sisters, one nun living in the Boston area, the other somewhere in Nebraska, are planning to converge on the mother house of their order which is somewhere in Kentucky, and so that provides another excellent excuse for another frolic and everybody is looking forward to June with impatience although you may be quite sure that, as next week end demonstrated, there will be plenty of excuses found to fill out May with lots of road running.

I am delighted to report that the belle pepper plants, tomato and egg plants I set out along about Thursday, appear to have established themselves and are now taking on a vigorous appearance and the radishes I planted because J. H. likes them, are now above ground so that the first batch which will be eaten up by the end of the present month will have an adequate supply following just behind.

I was glad to be able to wade through a couple of more battles of the Grant campaign (campaign) --odd how I forget how that word is spelled, --and even landed the battle lines as far as Petersburg, Virginia, with one or two references to Sheridan at Charlottesville, and, as for little Miss Lee, I suppose, as with me, the home town of Jefferson is always pleasant sounding pleasant to one's ears.

But the hour approaches for "Meet the Press", and as I should like to do so and since I shall have to do the same thing in the morning with the Shreveport Times, I guess I had better start folding forthwith. And I do so, holding the thought that your Sunday may have been much like you would have had it.....

7337

Monday, May 2nd, 1955.

Memorandum:

Full summer is upon us and the Tender Leaf Department is working overtime.

The day was cloudless, save for the dust, and tonight the waning moon is marvelous, --and no dust. The sun dial garden is lovely and after our little chat and a flock of mail has been taken care of, I shall sit for a pleasant hour by St. Giggins' fountain drinking in the moonlight and the Tender Leaf tea.

William endix, of all people, telephoned me this morning. He and his troupe are giving a play at the college tonight and Celeste, J. H. and Pat are probably enjoying it right at this moment. His call to me was to inquire if he might come down this morning but as I had other appointments, I demurred but suggested tomorrow and he said that would fit in with his plans nicely and so that is that.

The three Shreveport Times people arrived this morning on schedule. I arranged to give them a little tour before summoning Clemence. They were floored by what they had to see and wanted to write a dozen stories all at once, for apparently none of them had ever heard of Melrose before, or, if they had, had never envisioned it as being more than just another plantation.

I ended the tour on the Yucca gallery and just as I had finished a round about the artist's work, the bamboo parted and Lo! there stood Clemence, bearing a couple of packages from Blythe who must have arrived at the camp early this morning.

Because of the work being done on the Bermuda road, I suggested they might prefer to get their pictures of Clemence here at Yucca but they were anxious to visit her cabin and so I sent all four of them off through the bamboo and across the cotton fields. They returned about an hour later, elated at their contact with her and pleading to be allowed to return to Melrose for more stories.



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Ora telephoned this afternoon to say that she had bumped into the lady doctor on the street and was told that the Delgado got off to a splendid start. She reported that the pictures appeared to especial advantage and that while two other shows were supposedly going on in the Museum, it was the Hunter one that had all the people.

Ora and I had given titles to all the pictures for the Northwestern show last week and in subsequent consultation. These were properly arranged today and went to the printer, along with the notation on Primitive Art which the Delgado show. I suppose these will be available this week end and I shall, of course, send along one.

I was both surprised and disappointed to learn from Elythe that Station WWL did broadcast the Hunter show, together with a discussion about Primitive Art which she said both she and King thought splendid. I was under the impression that Bob had told me in his letter of last Tuesday which reached me on Friday that the WWL broadcast had been moved up to Thursday. Naturally, with this information to hand, I had not recommended the tuning in on WWL during dinner on Sunday. We were dining between 11:30 and 12, although the radio was playing softly at the time on some other station.

The strange doings in the piscatorial section goes on apace. Thousands of fish daily come to the surface of the river, struggle for breath and then suffocate. Everyone seems amazed at the hordes of them that finally float on the water after they have expired. I often see as many as a dozen as large as a man, and untold scores of others in diminishing proportions. A net work of big holes are dug along the banks for miles, perhaps 6 feet in depth and 10 feet in diameter and crews of men are kept busy, hauling the dead fish out of the water and burying them in these big graves. The turtles must really think it's their birthday for never since the beginning of time on Cane River has there been such a banquet for turtles, big and small and one often sees 6 or 8 large ones, all chewing up a bit of gar, catfish or trout. I hope the Conservation Department knows what it's doing but off hand the whole business seems like wanton destruction of fish to no particular point since the turtles will probably be hungry again by the time the new batches of young fish are again poured in to re-stock the river.

But St. Giggin's is calling and some mail must be attended to and so I mosey along, with thoughts flowing smoothly along in a Northeasterly direction.....

7339

7339

Tuesday, May 3rd, 1955.

Memorandum:

The full summer weather continues and the promise is for fair and warm weather in the days immediately ahead.

Something tells me that the grave diggers for the slaughtered fish must be falling behind in their job for there is a vague Oriental scent that seems to penetrate as far as the front gate when breezes from the South meander in that direction.

But the magnolias are smothering the gardens themselves with a heavy sweetness and today the first cape jessamine of the season unfolded, bringing with it that aromatic fragrance which finds no comparison in other flowers, except, perhaps, the carnation on occasion.

I saw J. H. for a moment at the store this morning. He said he and Celeste had liked the William Bendir show at the college last night. The house was completely sold out.

Along about 8 o'clock, I contacted Celeste, inviting her to join me in receiving the Bendir people, who had an appointment with me for 9:30. She was enchanted at the prospect.

And so we had coffee on her gallery at 9, and then sauntered toward the side gate, planning to stroll around to the front gate, when a car, quite unexpectedly, arrived at the side gate the same time we did.

It was Madam Beaufort. She wanted to know what we were up to and Celeste told her. She said she wanted some Grinoco bananas. It was about 80 degrees in the shade, but in spite of my fresh raiment, I dug her some. Fortunately I had an opportunity to climb into something else that was fresh to receive my guests. But Madam Beaufort kept on



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standing by her car, saying she must be on her way so that we might get on with our business, etc., etc., and kept right on talking. But finally she did manage to get in a start the motor when Celeste, in an ill advised gesture of hospitality, said it was too bad she couldn't stay long enough to come over to her house for a cup of coffee. Oh, but she most certainly could, and thereupon cut off the switch and got out, whereupon I said I simply had to go to receive the guests, and so Celeste, with remarkable self control, unique for her, moseyed over to give Beth a cup of coffee. And so my people came and our tour progressed to the end when Celeste was faintly able to join us. I could have batted Madam Beaufort for her bad manners and lack of consideration for Celeste but at the same time I had no disappointment in giving the tour on my own hook.

One member of the company was George Douglas, brother of Melvin. He didn't know that Rosalind lived in Natchitoches Parish. He must be years younger than Melvin and was very pleasant.

Carolyn telephoned from Alexandria to say she is doing a couple of days work in that place and would pass this way, if it was convenient. It was. She gave me a good account of the show which apparently was a great success on the opening day, the only one she attended although she plans to go to Marshall on Thursday or Friday, following the Alexandria session, to be with her parents for the week end, but plans to return to New Orleans next week some time to take pictures in color of the four walls comprising the Hunter show. A representative of Helena Rubenstein, being in New Orleans, wanted to buy one of the pictures at the opening, but it wasn't for sale, of course.

We took the opportunity to run through the final drafts of three articles, intended for magazines and one for the Houston Chronicle. I made only a few minor suggestions for altering a word or a phrase. They will be re-typed in Alexandria on the morrow and sent out tomorrow night. Let us hope at least one of them sticks. But I must knock off some mail now and then fold up my beard, what with 60 biddies of the Alexandria Garden Club scheduled for the morrow.....

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7341

Wednesday, May 4th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Such a lovely day, such a lovely night.

The grandflora magnolia, hard by the Chapel, has unfolded perhaps a dozen of its snowy globes which fill the air with a marvelous fragrance. One of the blossoms on a lower limb hangs outbeyond the white post supporting the end of the gallery, so that I can see it from where I am sitting. It seems doubly precious in the moonlight.

The enclosure under separate cover speaks for itself. I do not want the items he enclose returned.

The gift he mentioned is a little tabernacle called a Petition Box. It is perhaps 2 or 2 and a half feet in height and perhaps a foot square. It looks a little like a Greek mausoleum, with two little Doric columns in the right and left corner, flanking the door which has a Gothic shaped door painted on it. A slit in the upper middle of the door is made for parishoners to insert any petitions they may want to submit to the priest or their patron saint. It is altogether charming and is natural wood which Bob has beautifully waxed.

I set it up to the left of the stained glass window, hard by the big cross, and balancing the statue of the Blessed Martin at the right of the window. I placed it atop a stool, standing 3 feet in height, covering the stool with Lowells or Osnaberg, the same material as the curtains along side the stained glass and it looks as though it had been made for the place.

When Bob was here two or three week ago he mentioned it to me. He said he and Pat had been returning to New Orleans from some jaunt in the South Louisiana country when they passed an ancient Church which had long since been abandon and had partially caved in. The walked over the rubble, noticed a sort of box shaped thing and had gone back to the car and driven away. At a mile down the road, they both suddenly started to mention the object and



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thereupon turned around and went back. On returning to the spot, they turned over the box and found the lovely little columns and were delighted with the inscription, --"Petitions", - carved into the front and still bearing flecks of gold that had originally been inlaid.

And so they brought it home with them, sandpapers and strengthened it and placed it in their dining room, using it as a cabinet to hold their wine bottles. But after they had visited Melrose a couple of years back, they kept thinking that the Chael was really the place for it and so they sent it by Carolyn. I thought it so sweet of them, and I must write and say as much forthwith.

Our dry weather and cloudless skies, --save for the clouds of dust, continue. I had the Alexandria Garden Club this afternoon and found several members very pleasant but with a crowd of 60, one gets to speak to nobody with any satisfaction.

Several of them want to come back on a smaller tour, of course, and three different ones spoke to me of another club to which they or their husbands belong, which want to make a Melrose tour.

I suggested that they write me for I am too tired at the moment to decide if I want anybody other than the unscheduled passers-by.

I had expected Celeste to assist me this afternoon but instead she told me this morning she had some luncheon guests coming and that she hoped I would give them a tour before the Alexandria contingent arrived. I told her I should be enchanted to do so and that I trusted she was going to keep her promise to assist me. But she let out a little cry and said she simply had to go to town to play bridge, and so that was that.

Between licks, I knocked off some captions for the Houston Chronicle article and hope to get it off by air on the morrow. Carolyn had to return to business in Alexandria today and has an appointment there with Crozat, the prison expert, on the morrow. She says he is a fine person but that he doesn't think too much of the Kennon administration and is quitting his Louisiana State job this summer. So things turn and so must I turn to a few dabs of mail and so to fold.....

7343

Thursday, May 5th, 1955.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Tuesday letter in today's post, and how swiftly it traveled from your true hand to mine.

I can well imagine how pressure from both sides of the daily firing line makes it impossible to set hand to paper at such busy times and there is always consolation in knowing that sooner or later a chink of opportunity will appear on one front or the other for attending to little personal matters and during the interim, we both understand perfectly how it is simply good sense to await the moment when a breathing pace comes within our grasp again. My fervent prayer is that little Miss Lee will never try to create such an opening but will maintain the wisdom of waiting for a certain set of circumstances that will operate to make the grass a little greener on that elongated island or for respite to appear in the hurly-burly of the daytime routine enabling one to take up the thread of conversation which is kept unwinding so constantly by telepathy when typewriters are beyond reach, -- the chance to employ them.

But I do so whole heartedly appreciate the lovely letter that confirmed my belief that things must be going at a terrific speed, and being assured of this, I can readily face the fact that for the moment, we are bound to cultivate the thought waves exclusively until a measure of repose has been achieved.

I believe it was rainy in your neighborhood today but locally the hot dry weather continues. So does the dust, of course. Along about 10 o'clock, Mary Pringle appeared at my door. She seemed fine and said she had come to ask if she might take some interiors in the big house. I said I thought she might. I introduced her to Dr. Knipmeyer and after a few moments, she went on her way, after giving me an invitation from Blythe to come over to the camp for dinner, which I eventually did and where I learned that Blythe had been at the big house while May was over here although I had assumed that Mary had driven over here from the camp.

The dinner, as always, was delicious and endlessly bountiful. Clemence was balancing pots and pans at a great



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rate in the culinary section and table talk maintained a  
sprightly level in spite of the fact that I could have batted Mary  
for her ineptitude, stupidity or whatever one might style it.

Easily within Clemence's hearing, she said she wanted to ask me something  
which she admitted was none of her business but about which she was curious  
as she was so ignorant in that field, and asked if I would tell her the truth.  
I told her I didn't know if I knew the answer, since she hadn't stated the  
question and before knowing that, I should not be able to say if  
I would tell the truth or not.

Well, what she wanted to know was:

"How much does a Museum like the Delgado or the Fine Arts  
Department of a place like Northwestern, pay an artist  
for the privilege of displaying their pictures."

She said she had been asking Clemence about it earlier and that  
Clemence had said she didn't know because she hadn't received  
anything for such rights. Perhaps, since I was handling the matter, I  
could tell her.

Now there isn't the slightest desire or intention on the part of  
Mary Pringle to be malicious and yet but such cock-eyed questions, she is  
bound to have evoked visions of financial income in Clemence's  
untutored brain and rendered a service to nobody and perhaps quite a dis-  
service to several.

When I told her that artists sometimes work for years, always hoping that  
the Delgado or Northwestern will some day permit their pictures to be displayed,  
and that many an artist never realizes such a hope, she seemed a  
little surprised but without believing. Then she asked, and before Clemence,  
about how much they paid somebody like a painter to let them, --the TV  
people, take their likenesses on film. By this time, The Hunter brain was  
going around in circles, and all that I had tried so hard to  
avoid, --an inflated concept in Clemence's mind that everybody on a foot  
of film must by the law of nature, receive at least a million dollars for  
the appearance. I could only wonder at the effectiveness for unhappiness  
that a dumb bunny can really project without the slightest intention  
of doing so. I mentioned that about size to ten thousand dollars had been  
invested in the film and telecast time and asked her if she thought  
newspapers, radio and TV allotted space gratis and added to the size of their  
investment by paying unknown people to let them advertise their  
wares to boot. A million dollars worth of free advertising.....  
but the light suddenly dawned in her mind and she understood all, after having  
so successfully placed a dark cloud in Clemence's heart. What a bag  
and how many angles there are to sweet charity. Must break off. Bless  
you again for today's lovely surprise and how nice it will be looking for the item  
you mentioned as being en route.....

6167

7345

Friday, May 6th, 1955.  
Memorandum:

The lovely hot weather continues and I seem to  
be thriving under it. Yesterday I felt like "La Troisieme Jeunesse  
de Frau Prune", a sensation which was probably induced primarily  
by that foll question of Mary Pringle which is bound to  
have confused la Hunter.

But a new day and a new perspective and I seemed twice as full  
of vim and vigor and somehow that always inclines one to believe he  
has accomplished more although he probably hasn't.

And then, too, there is always a positive ingredient when one begins  
the day with a laugh, and laugh I did this morning when I saw  
that rascal, Sam Brown, who, forgetting that since he broke  
his leg last year, he has always had to hobble along with a cane,  
for this morning, in a flurry of excitement, he temporarily forgot  
his assumed limp and was skipping along the road, proud as Punch  
of the 55 pound catfish he had just dragged ashore from  
the surface of the river where the suffocating of the fish goes on  
apace. I had never seen a 55 pound catfish and so was impressed  
by its appearance but not half so much as by Sam's forgetfulness  
about his former broken leg.

Carolyn passed this way last night, en route to Marshall.  
She plans to be heading for Baton Rouge again on Sunday and  
will pick me up and whisk me to Northwestern and set me down again  
before heading on South.

She said she has recently been to Angola, escorted by  
Mr. Cozart, or some such, the prison expert who has been doing  
over the State penal institutions. She liked him but learned  
confidentially that he is quitting his connections with the  
Administration in August.

This machine seems to be acting up and you may not be able to  
make much out of what I am writing, or trying to write, and so  
so if a vast void suddenly develops, don't be surprised or  
alarmed perhaps one this that is wrong are these or is these terrible  
Denholme margins.



7346

At super tonight, Pat told me he is getting a delivery of his new airplane tomorrow.

Pat seemed vaguely surprised when I answered in the affirmative to his invitation to take a ride with him. I have long wanted to get a good view of the loops and bends of Cane River from Colfax to Natchitoches and since we shall be able to select our own time for such an exploration, I shall try to select a time when a slight cloud coverage will eliminate the glare, or a twilight hour when the surface of the river should be pleasantly silvered to stand out in strength from the verdant margins.

It's so strange I can never recall the name of the negro college in North Louisiana, --Grambling, or some such. I had a telephone from that quarter today, asking if the graduating class might visit Melrose on Wednesday the 11th. This will sandwich in a Wednesday afternoon between the 4th and the 18th, both of which were different Garden Club days from the Alexandria neighborhood.

Some Baton Rouge negroes whom I do not seem to know but who seem to know or know of me, I know not which, have been contemplating doing an annual Passion Play somewhere in the Baton Rouge area and some of them will come to see me shortly. It is curious how something one ponders upon, without discussing it with a soul, will sometimes come to pass. And since I have long envisioned a black Christ on a white cross, the idea of doing a Passion Play, --making it an annual affair, -- seemed perfectly natural when the idea came up. I understand some of the negroes interested in the project are professional people, --doctors, teachers and so on, and I'm wondering if so faraway from the Cane River country, the color variations, as between the black and the chocolate, makes any difference. If so, there will come the first tug of war, if I undertake anything in reference to the business. For it the color thing does exist, you may be sure the mulatto section will want the chief roles whereas I envision a nice coal black Christ and a mighty pale-skinned Judas.

Well, so things turn as this week end begins. It goes without saying that I hope the call of the great open spaces has already made itself felt in many a quarter and that a week end of quiet may prelude the neighborhood of Lyme.....

8437

7347

Sunday, May 8th, 1955.

Memorandum: Our hot, dry weather continues and water faucets keep supplying more delicate garden things with sufficient volume to keep them growing. Well established things don't require extra moisture but butterfly lilies, banana plants and vegetables respond appreciatively to the extra hand out.

Carolyn passed this way around 2 this afternoon and we headed for town forthwith. Frankly, I was delighted with the exhibition. The gallery in the Fine Arts Building is well lighted and as the place is heavily carpeted it is quiet and comfortable to stroll about and the lighting is indirect from the ceiling, so that everything appears to advantage.

I was delighted with the number of people attending and particularly their quality.

I had never chanced to meet Orville Hanchey who heads the Art Department. It was his work that illustrated the Ford Times article about Christmas at Natchitoches last year. He is a tall, athletic number and received us jointly with Ora on his right.

We were able to view the 35 pictures, all of which appeared to especial advantage, I thought, for they were all framed and each had ample space without the necessity in any instance of one hanging above the other.

Before we had quite finished, however, we began encountering other visitors and soon there was much buzzing. There was much gentry and a goodly number intellectuals and a sprinkling of average citizens.

Dr. John Kyser sought me out to say how delighted he is that the college is having the exhibition. He said he is having all the pictures recorded on colored slides as a permanent record of at least one exhibition which the college will want to share with associate educational institutions across the country.



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I was particularly glad to see Pat and his girl friend, Juanita, along with several other friends. Pat asked me if I would show him the ones I thought most interesting. I admonished him and his girl friend not to approach them with a view of either admiring or not admiring them but merely as something to find ente(enteraining) if any there should be to which they might re-act in such a fashion. Before they had progressed far, they both were having heaps of fun and Pat was expressing astonishment, too, and ended up by asking me if I thought I could buy one for him which he wanted to present to somebody in Baton Rouge.

R. B. and Ora reminded us about supper, following the show and we drove there directly. There rooms are lovely and spacious and pleasantly cool. We had a chance to have a drink before other guests arrived, including John and Thelma Kyser, Pat and Juanita, Rosalind Aswell. Conversation was good and the buffet supper delicious, -- sandwiches, a fresh chicken salade sliced in inch square sticks, potato chips, cake and whatever drinks one wanted, and I wanted ice tea. Conversation, general at times and sometimes in two's and three's, ran along gaily and it was after 8 before we said goodnight.

I was delighted with the day, both as to the show and to the supper.

You will already have received the clipping I am sending by air when I post this letter. I thought Miss MacDonald handled the subject nicely and I especially appreciated her adroitness in handling the Old Age Pension matter so that the Welfare Office couldn't come down like a ton of brick on Clemence. I shall drop Miss MacDonald a note of appreciation tonight and another to Alanzo Landsford on behalf of the artist for the Delgado show.

Our Sunday dinner today was especially pleasant, -- just J. H., Pat and I, -- Celeste and Madam Regard being in South Louisiana. Pat had read me the Shreveport article just before dinner and J. H. was pleased that the pecane matter was mentioned in the article. He said he never knew before that I had studied International Law and we slid along over such points as "Law of Ultimate Destination", etc., about which he knew little or nothing but was unusually interested.

But now I must attend to the mail and then fold up my beard, what with gardeners to attend to in the morning before I whisk away little Miss Clemence to see the Northwestern exhibit. I have thought of Lyme so frequently today, no ping a measure of leisure obtained in that quarter.....

7349

Monday, May 9th, 1955.

Memorandum:

And it has been such a happy birthday, thanks to little Miss Lee.

The mail came a little earlier than usual this morning, affording me ample opportunity to unbundle the bundles of happiness coming my way.

I couldn't resist giving a spin to Le Petit Prince of Antoine de St. Exupery, marvelously recorded in harmony with the quality of the composition, and the Chanson d'Auvergne which are pure sights in the folk tale section and charmingly rendered by Miss Reed. I had not heard these before and found it great fun running through them the first time to whet my appetite for Tender Leaf time tonight when we have had our little chat and the mail has been accomplished. I might add, parenthetically, that the stiff dark board which insured safe traveling for the package, is going to serve little Miss Clemence as a canvas one of these days but she doesn't know it.

And may I say how noble of you to have tracked down the copies of the Hunter "Look". I shall write Elythe tonight telling her of your kindness and asking her for the address of her grandson in the University of Virginia or where ever the place is. I am delighted to have the other copy for myself.

But the gayest item in the entire package was the birthday greeting, so gay in its original design, so delightful in the Lyme overtones, for I nearly fell out when I encountered Yucca and the cotton fields so unexpectedly. That really was a surprise and I love it.

This evening I got around to your nice fat letter. The message, as expressed in words and in zinnia seeds of so abundant a variety, delight my soul. I shall be planting the seed at dawn, and thanks to your thoughtfulness in preparing them so adroitly, I shall be able to know what I am planting without ever adding a word on the packages.

It was so thoughtful of you to interpret Bob's letter for me and now I can readily understand how I missed the Sunday broadcast. As for the film, I believe it will be shown on



CP67

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an N. EC program first, and why I said "an" instead of  
"a NEC", I wouldn't know. If purchased by Hollywood, I shall  
be able to secure a schedule of New York releases, I believe.

I'm so glad the pot and pan section is working  
alright. How much your sentiments mean to me when expressing  
the thought that we might use them to the ultimate,  
by stirring up a business together. Being a profound believer  
in miracles, I'm not ever dreaming of relinquishing  
the thought.....

I got my friend, Father Roble of St. Augustin's, to  
drive little Miss Hunter and me to town this morning, Carolyn,  
having departed at 5:15 a.m. for where ever. Father Roble is  
so kind and I was delighted that the ladies across the  
fence were in South Louisiana so we might go to college, as it  
were, without being pressed for time. Clemence  
was perfectly delighted with all she had to see, the beauty  
of the gallery and the excellence of the framing, hanging, etc.  
On our arrival, the head of the department greeted me cordially  
but lapsed into an adequate but formal: "How do you do, Clementine"  
to Clemence. I had assumed the head of the department element  
might find itself out through by the element of artist to artist  
influence but it didn't, and it really didn't matter, what with  
quite a group of people, to my surprise, already  
viewing the exhibition. In two minutes, Clemence had a gallery trail  
behind her like a prize golfer and throughout she felt perfectly secure  
in my close company. Many of the pictures of years back she had  
forgotten, as we may forget having written a letter of a decade  
back, and her delight was bubbling. I asked her many a question about  
the different characters appearing in her works, how she had come  
to select this or that subject, etc., etc., and the gallery behind  
us, respectful and silent as a pin, was entranced at all they  
had to hear. After we had made a complete round, a secretary  
asked me if I would kindly sign the register. I said I should  
be delighted, accepted the pen, handed to me, and turning to  
the artist, --to her surprise and the amazement of the gallery, asked  
if she wouldn't write her name. She said, --and this delighted me,  
that she didn't think she could write out her whole name but she  
could mark down her initials. I told her that would be even better,  
whereupon she made a sizeable "C H", after which I appended my  
name, I hope in the line below. She was naturally pensive as we  
left the Fine Arts building and headed through the leafy avenues  
of the campus in Father Roble's car. She rested her forehead on the  
palm of her hand, --"studying" about all she had seen and  
the memories it evoked. We brought her back the old river road,  
and tonight, I'll bet, she's painting like she never painted before.  
And now I must turn to the mail and then to Auvergne and le Petit  
Prince and when folding times comes, my birthday will have been so ha

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uesday, May 10th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Our dry, hot weather continues and the Weather Bureau continues  
to promise "widely scattered showers" for the morrow.

Two unexpected wrinkles of no importance turned up today but  
I shall report them merely because they are on the unusual  
side.

I saw the ladies, back from South Louisiana, at the coffee hour,  
this morning. As I departed, I was presented with a big gift,  
about the size of a large hat box, and beautifully wrapped in soft  
yellow paper and tied with a perfectly lovely pom-pom of slightly  
darker yellow ribbon. On presenting it to me, Celeste said  
it was a birthday gift from her and Madam Regard but that there  
was one string attached, --after I had removed the contents, she  
would like to have the box back as she had in mind making use  
of it for wrapping a wedding present.

And so I marched home in quite a hurry, as I had people  
waiting for me, and finally along after noon, got around to open  
it, which wasn't easy, since I was supposed to save the ribbon, paper  
and box. After half an hour, however, I was successful for  
the box, fully a foot in diameter, perhaps a foot and a half,  
was well tied up, but I managed it without damaging anything,  
after which, having removed the contents, I returned same to  
the ladies and they were altogether delighted to get it back.

This big box had contained four tiny wine glasses, duplicating  
those received at Christmas in a package one tenth the size of today's  
package. What in the world do you suppose impelled them to  
wrap up such a gift in such a huge container.

This afternoon I had a very interesting chat with a gentleman  
of color, en route from South Louisiana to some place in Texas.  
He had telephoned to inquire if he might see me and while taking a  
look at me, he had an opportunity to make a little tour of  
Melrose of which he had heard before but never visited. He had  
something semi-confidential to report to me on his expressed hope I  
would not repeat it to anyone who might mention it in colored  
educational circles. Naturally I gave him my promise.



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The thing that happened seems to have been somewhat along this line:

A group of colored educators were talking about conferring an honorary degree, through a colored college, on some white person, known to have a sympathetic mind in non-racial matters. My name was brought up as having done something regarding three ladies of color, meriting the admiration of colored and white people alike, --Marie Therese, heretofore unknown, Eliza Greenfield, totally forgotten and little Miss Hunter of whom nobody had heard tell, as it were. But mulatto members were opposed to anyone who had brought forth such an extraordinary trilogy. There were several reasons of varying importance, such as, that all three women fell into the strictly negro group, which the mulatto members resented. The trouble with Marie Therese in particular was that she hailed from Africa and nobody wanted to think about the Dark Continent. The Black Swan was to be frowned upon not only because she was negro but also because she was once a slave and nobody wanted to be reminded of that. As for Clemence, she is nothing to be proud of because she doesn't read or write.

One can readily see what a big help someone like me would be in trying to give a lift to the second class citizens, serving up three such courses.

How right was John Erskine when he had one of his characters in "Helen of Troy" remark that just as the world seems to be getting civilized, somebody unexpectedly suggests we all go on a picnic.

This evening, along about first dark, I had a funeral beneath the old Washingtonia Robusta palm. Outer Mongolia had some kittens in the old store two or three weeks ago. As she dines on the front gallery at Yucca, it seems as though she selected a mighty remote place for her lying-in business. After breakfast, she would usually walk along in front of me as I would head for the front gate, and then turn off to pass out the Grade A milk. But she didn't seem quite so well today and, to my surprise, she brought all her kittens all the way over here this evening, which must have been quite a hauling job, as all had to be carried in her mouth. She had finished the job just as I left for supper and was sitting on the gallery. On my return I found her dead in the pathway by the big old sugar pot. It wasn't exactly a death-bed gift she had handed me in delivering the children thus but I shall accept it as such and do my best to see them properly reared. At now to turn to the mail and after that a little round with Auvergne.....

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Wednesday, May 11th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Our warm weather continues but the scene was slightly different today as to lighting effects as it was cloudy and one it almost, but not quite, sprinkled. I shall be holding the thought it may make up its mind by tomorrow as it remains cloudy tonight.

It is my understanding that the ladies across the fence attended the Hunter show at North eastern today. I never did see them this morning as they had departed before the coffee hour and my day was too busy after that to establish contact.

The Northwestern State College Library telephoned me this afternoon. It is, of course, quite a separate Department from that of the Fine Arts and the respective organizations are housed in buildings far removed from each other. What the Library wanted to tell me was that it is starting a Hunter file and asked me if I could give them dates on various publications carrying references to her work. I could.

Rosalind telephoned this afternoon, inviting me to have supper with her and her mother, Madam Hightower of Georgia, but naturally I declined. Sunday night's frolic ought to last me for at least another 10 or 15 years.

The thought occurred to me that it might be nice for Clemence to have a little sheet, similar to the one about the Cane River series, which would carry a reprint of the Picayune, or rather the Shreveport Times article, using the cut Charles Cunningham used in the Hatchiotches Times, showing the Baptisin' belonging to the lady doctor. Clemence could give these to visitors when people come to her house to see her Art Exhibit. I telephoned Charles to ask how much it would cost to make such a reprint in view of his possession of the Baptisin' cut and he promised to quote me after he had examined the length of the article, asking me in the mean time if I would secure permission for the reprint from the Shreveport Times. I imagine the work might be done for about the price of one of the Hunter canvases and, if so, I shall sell one of mine and thus be able to balance the business adroitly and with dispatch.



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7354, April 1955, 1955

A letter in today's post from Margaret McDonald states that she wishes to do the story of the Cane River plates forthwith, and she requests additional particulars. I am so glad to have the photographs of the Hatcher and Feliciana series too, since I shall send them along, hoping they may there by secure a dab of free advertising. She mentions her intention to try to sell the Clemence story to other publications and the Cane River one as well. That ought to give Carolyn quite a jolt. My effort will be to walk the tight rope sufficiently carefully so as to sell historical items through the medium of a Shreveport Times special feature item without advancing enough data to provide a story for a national magazine.

The Grambling people came this afternoon by bus. They were all negroes, youths and maidens around 18 or 20, I suppose. It was all wonderfully new to all of them, the sight of a plantation beyond the front gate and the history of the place which seemed even more wonderful to them. They had come the one hundred odd miles from where ever Grambling is situated and made this their first port of call. I know not where else they may have gone, perhaps the sight of one or the other of the historical forts to the North and West of Hatchitoches, the colonial cemetery or some such. I thought it very kind of them to telephone me from town, late in the evening, just before heading back for home, merely to say how much they had enjoyed their Melrose visit.

What with one thing and another, I haven't started reading anything during the past couple of days but perhaps I shall get to it this week end. What I remember most about the end of "All Quiet on the Western Front" was the fact that the book ends just before Grant and Lee meet to arrange surrender terms, leading one to think that a more appropriate title might have been selected, something such as Big Up-roar to Appomattox. The military leader who seemed to emerge most clearly in this volume seems to be Phil Sheridan.

I watered the zinnias again tonight and even found myself expecting to see them pushing up some greenery although they have been planted but a couple of days. But what with the heat currently obtaining and water being administered, they will be putting in an appearance above ground almost any time, I reckon. ....

7355

7355

Thursday, May 12th, 1955.

Memorandum:

This was one of those pleasant, busy days, at the close of which one feels more tired than usual because of the consciousness that nothing in particular has been accomplished.

My time, all around the clock, seems to have been cluttered with people and while I welcomed the contacts with some, most of such pleasures were somehow cancelled out by the presence of too many people at some given point of time. I suppose I have always inclined to favor individual contacts but as time goes on, I sense that there is something almost futile in spending one's time trying to extract some kind of pleasure out of human ingredients that seem to have no particular inclination to coalesce.

Of course it was good to see Robina and Miss Ellie (Ragan). I thought they both looked wonderful although I noticed that Robina's hands had a tendency to shake all the time. For the life of me, I can't imagine why those two gals, knowing the local set up, carried out their notion to drag some woman with them to whom the place meant nothing and who obviously lacked all capacity to comprehend anything about it. Had the two ladies come together, it would have been so pleasant to invite them to dine with us but since they brought along the extra number, I didn't bother to invite the three of them and so they came after dinner.

They had taken the opportunity of visiting Clemence's show at the college before coming down here and were astonished at its attractiveness.

But before dinner, just as I was waving goodbye to some departing pilgrims, Lionel Jeanmard drove in and so was here for dinner at noon. I enjoyed the opportunity to chat with him during the meal and immediately afterward, on coming to Yucca, he asked if that lady who did the painting was still alive and seemed surprised when I said she was. He must have read the Times Picayune review of her exhibit at the Delgado, for, as I recall, that was all written in the past tense and somehow did give one the impression that the work referred



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to was something that had been completely finished, so far as a contemporary  
labors of the artist was concerned. Lionel said he would be so happy  
if he could meet the lady sometime. I suggested we stroll over to  
her house which we did.

On our return here, Robina, Miss Nellie and their friend were  
waiting on the gallery, and as they came in, Celeste arrived with  
a Mrs. Wright in tow. Mrs. Wright, a Heneyville number,  
was precisely of the same personality as Robina's friend, and,  
so far as I know, neither the one nor the other has uttered a word  
up to now. With such a odd collection of people, nobody got anywhere  
and Lionel had had enough of it before very long and I was  
delighted when Robina and Miss Nellie asked for a tour in which  
Celeste and Madam Wright participated and I guess everybody except  
Celeste was glad when the thing was over.

A telephone call from Ora brought an interesting bit of  
information. Rosalind at telephoned me last night and naturally  
enough fell to talking about the Northwestern show and about the  
personality of the artist, --an interest that seemed a little  
unusual to me since I realized at the time that she had never visited  
Clemence in spite of the number of times she has invaded the Cane  
River country although she now asked me if I would take her there  
sometime real soon.

With this in mind, you may readily imagine how impressed I was  
when Ora told me that Rosalind had just contacted her to get  
the date of the June 16th, 1953 issue of Look, --which Ora didn't  
know, and that Rosalind told Ora she had contacted  
Colliers about doing an article on Clemence and that Colliers had  
asked her to provide them with some notion as to how much had been  
done in the Cane River article before they would decide about  
doing one under Madam Aswell's pen. Personally, I think anybody  
has a right to do articles on any subject he pleases but I do  
think Rosalind was a little snide in casting about for material  
on the subject from me without telling me to begin with that she  
wanted to try her hand at an article.

What with Margaret McDonald, Rosalind Aswell and C. Ramsey  
all fishing in the same tub of water for a while, it seems to me  
the knowledge of this effort on the part of the one, --that is, Carolyn,  
ought to give her an unusual impetus to get busy in marketing  
said article. And so I shall pass along this information to her,  
without letting Rosalind know anyone else is contemplating the  
same move as she, and, of course, without breathing a word that  
I know she, Rosalind, is trying to cook up a bit of usiness.  
This is a tiresome letter. May I improve a dab on the morrow.....

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Friday, May 13th, 1955.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your letter of the 9th in today's  
post, and how noble of you, in view of all the pressures from  
up town and down, to find time for a little chat.

I am sorry the impending week end is going to be another shambles  
but I shall continue holding the thought that a peaceful one may  
eventuate regardless, if given enough time.

Until that happy week end arrives, I pray you not to try to  
write for I shall assume that things rock along much as usual  
until I hear from you and it will make me so much happier to  
know that you are conserving your strength for the "must stuff" during  
these hectic times.

I am glad the package you mentioned arrived on Friday. I am  
hoping circumstances were such that you could manage it alright al-  
though I fear that since there could be no jaunt, you may have  
encountered some difficulties but I am hoping not.

As for what may turn up locally for the impending week end,  
I haven't any idea. The weather man this morning gave the five  
day forecast and it was just a slice of that which has been  
obtaining since Easter, --continued hot and dry.

Although the new Parish library in Natchitoches has been  
functioning for about a year, it is going to have its official  
opening on Sunday. As a member of the State Board, I suppose  
J. H. and Celeste will attend. I have already declined. It  
is in the cards that Essae Mae will be among those present and  
I suppose she may pass this way but I know she has an  
appointment somewhere else for Sunday night, --somewhere in South  
Louisiana, so I suppose she may well skip this bend of the river,  
I hope.

In the batch of enclosures sent in this morning's post,  
.....



7358

I know you were as delighted as I that a card from Madam Marco indicated she is able to take pen in hand again. My secretary pointed out that the address on this card was simply to Lestan and that no last name appeared which is of no consequence but may indicate a vague pre-occupation of the mind of the writer on personal concerns.

I thought Dor's letter entertaining both about la Storm and also about the gift item from Harnett Kane, the pages in some sections of the book being printed upside down. Surely he was able to get these job lots for next to nothing which ought to suit a person of his calibre just perfectly.

The letter from Margaret McDonald spoke for itself. I was so happy to have some photographs of plates to send her, thanks to the generosity of little Miss Lee. I wrote her a few pages of stuff which she might want to use in the Shreveport article. I think Carolyn is going to be surprised when and if she ever sees the Shreveport paper carrying that article. I haven't heard from her this week so I assume she must have become lost in the political labyrinth of Baton Rouge or perhaps she is in Pirates Alley or California or any old place, knowing her ability to fly about as we do.

Somebody representing a concern making slides in color for school distribution, --a Missouri concern, passed this way by appointment today. The collection being made allows but 21 film or slides for each State. Five subjects were decided on for this Parish, leaving only 16 slides for the balance of Louisiana which seems disproportionate to me but that is there business. In this Parish, --I think there are 67 in all, they took a likeness of the statue of Uncle Jack and the circular staircase in town and pecan trees, Yucca and the African House at Melrose. I turned them loose after showing them a bout and the only shot I saw them preparing was Doreatha, the cook, in a red and white checkered dress, a big yellow day lily draped over one ear and the African House in the background with much blue sky and some big white clouds over all. The thing must have been colorful to say the least.

My day has been fairly busy and I have quite a lot of mail to knock out before collapsing for the tender Leaf hour when I shall dip into Overstreet's "The Mind Alive as my mind begins to fall asleep.....

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Sunday, May 15th, 1955.

Memorandum:

A full week end but withal pleasant in spite of the drought, what with no distracting Henrys about.

Dr. Rand telephoned me Saturday afternoon on two counts: first, he wanted to say that KALB - TV station, Alexandria, had contacted him to say they are in receipt of the Melrose film and will telecast it shortly, advising him 24 hours in advance. He, in turn, will telephone me while I, in turn, will telephone town, and there seems to be a heap of turnin in the whole business.

Carolyn telephoned from Baton Rouge last night to ask for some data on some of the free lance work she is doing outside the 21 scripts she is doing. She is as busy as a bee, she said, but is getting allong alright. She doesn't know when she will get back this way, --perhaps before the end of the month, perhaps following summer vacation.. And that, of course, is another way of saying after the Winks and the Joe Henrys have come and gone.

It was pleasant to learn that the Houston Chronicle has taken the Hunter article. I guess this is the one I did under the title of Miracle at Melrose although I have half forgotten.

The fact that the Houston Chronicle has accepted this is going to be a blow, I fear, both to Margaret McDonald and to Rosalind Aswell, for I suppose both ladies had their eye on that paper for the stories they contemplated since both, I believe, had written for Madam Hobby's paper before.

The news of the Chronicle's acceptance, along with the illustrations which Carolyn had sent in, impelled me to recommend to her that she might be able to beat la McDonald from her



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starting point at the Shreveport Times with the story about the Cane River series of plates, although it would be remarkable if the same lady, writing for the Shreveport paper could have two articles in a row beaten when starting them off for the Houston Chronicle.

I think it in the nature of a crime to suggest such a thing as rounding out said article to Carolyn at this time when she is so busy but it would seem she accomplishes more when she is pressed for time and Heaven knows she has been long in getting to the Cane River series. Of course I should welcome the publicity these plates might get since I have a couple of invoices coming up from Rock Hall shortly and I imagine that both the Shreveport article, currently impending and the Houston one which might be realized, might turn a couple of sales in the direction of Cane River after either or both come to print.

Two commentaries on the Clemence business are vaguely amusing. One mulatto complained to another who chanced to be a friend of mine and reported the tirade that she couldn't understand why I should bother to have engineered all the publicity for Clemence that I did in the Shreveport paper since Clemence is a negro and everybody knows the mulattoes are much more worth of white people's attention.

The other had to do with some bag in town whom I do not know. She was complaining to somebody that although the newspapers gave the impression that I had sponsored the Hunter shows, she, herself had known about Clemence's paintings for more than a year back,-- long before I had known her. It chanced that as the one person complained, the other was glancing at the Melrose Plantation plate hanging on the wall, gentling taking the starch out of the complainer and her priority by pointing to the precedes of Clemence's house on that plate which was brought out, the first of the series, more than the year back which the bag had claimed. Isn't it astonishing how people can have so much time and inclination to quibble over such tomfoolery.

Father Callahan and Father Roble came to see me this afternoon. Father Callahan brought 25 copies of his book on St. Augustin's Church, asking me to sell them for him if I could. And so the week plays out and so we begin a new one. Yours has been a busy week end. May you get a break on the next go-round.....

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7361

Monday, May 16th, 1955.

Memorandum:

At midnight the heavens labored and brought forth a dab of moisture, --about half an inch, I think, and this evening around six, they repeated the performance. And as an inch was precisely what everybody wanted, everybody is slap happy about the situation.

Dr. Rand telephoned this afternoon to say that the Melrose film will be broadcast over Alexandria's KALB Station tomorrow night, --Tuesday, at six forty five. Something tells me I shall not hear E. Roscoe Murrow tomorrow evening.

And speaking of Ed. Murrow, the static was so tremendous tonight, I couldn't hear his program although I gathered from an occasional word slipping in between the crashing that Larry Laseur is substituting for him. Mr. Murrow must be hiding somewhere.

The lady doctor called me tonight. She said she didn't have anything in particular to say except to remark on the fact that she was casting backward glances at the last weeks of her pregnancy which is the only months in recent years when people actually left her alone for a few hours. She said she is going much too fast but thinks she will live out the summer alright if too many people don't decide to get stricken in the middle of the night. She also mentioned how much fun she had today with Clemence's brother who, it seems, is her yard man. Frankly, I didn't know Clemence had a brother in Natchitoches although old John Ruben, her papa who lived near the spillway half a century ago had dozens of children, according to J. H. Well, anyway, the lady doctor reported that early this afternoon when about to have a cup of coffee, she called in the yard man to give him a dab of the same brew and she took the opportunity to read him the Shreveport Times article of May 8th. She said she played a trick on him by throwing in an extrasentence here and there which confused him wonderfully, as for example, when she remarked:



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"You see, it seems to say here that your sister is getting plum famous and that you are getting to be just no account at all....."

Then she let him know she was improvising and they had a great time laughing together. She says he is forever coming to the office and asking the nurse if the lady doctor will let him have two or three dollars for this and that and that usually he gets pretty high on the borrowings but, miraculous to relate, he never fails to come around within a day or so and pay back the borrowed money.

She asked me to come to dine with her and Don. Having accepted Ora's invitation, I seem to have established grounds for complaint on the part of other would be hosts and hostesses. On thing is certain, I shall make no other exceptions than Or's and the lady doctor's, in my determination to "stay put".

From the racket going on outside, I take it that our thunder storm has paid us a return visit and so has the rain. Last night I got only about half of "Meet the Press" which I regretted as I wanted to hear what the German Ambassador, the guest, would have to report. But when static made listening impossible, I told myself I could catch up with the same program on Monday night at 10:30, over WHO, Des Moines, but at that time I hadn't dreamed we would have another electric visitation 24 hours later.

I am so glad the reading machine is not effected by the weather, thus enabling me to have a go at Les Histoires d'Auvergne at any old time I please or dipping into some sleep inducing volume which never fails to start my head nodding, if the subject matter doesn't seem up to snuff.

The day's post brought a letter from Dora which I did not finish reading before an interruption knocked out secretarial assistance. I thought it kind of him to send along a check of twenty dollars to help defray expenses incurred in putting on the Northwestern show. It goes without saying, of course, that I shall return it forthwith for the show was engineered and paid for in advance of its opening. He mentioned that Kay had returned from California and something about her wanting to return to the Golden West again. Hummmmmmm.....

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Tuesday, May 17th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Our rain last night stretched itself into an inch and a quarter and whole cape jessamine bushes which had been laggardly supporting buds, long over due for blossoming, came into flower over night. And the day was pretty that followed and there was no dust for a change and everything was lovely.

This morning I sent word for Clemence to come see me. A grandchild reported that she was at the camp. It seems Blythe came up and Clemence was over there, getting things scrubbed up for tomorrow's party.

Celeste and J. H. had asked me if I didn't propose bringing her to see the film at 6:45. I told them I did but that such hopes were never certain until they had been realized. And so, an hour before TV time, I betook myself to her cabin. There was nobody there. I took off across the cotton fields to the Rand camp. No Clemence. As it was by then approaching time for the program, I moseyed home and one of her neighbors came a-jumpin', saying Tee-Boy was home. I sent for her. She was not home, having gone with her helper, Atman Remo, to call on Little River friends.

By then it was time for me to jump across the fence, as it were, and I did so. J. H. had asked several of the men, just in from the field, to see the film. --Log, Charles Turner, Ezra, Claude Clyde Emmett Davis and so on.

And so the film came on and I thought it rather good but rather dark, and cut so much, I scarcely recognized the continuity. Celeste thought it "darling" and J. H. said it was alright and Dan didn't say anything and that was that.

I returned to Yucca promptly afterwards and two minutes later, Clemence appeared. She said she had brought a message



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from Mrs. Rand, inviting Celeste, J.H. and me to dine at the camp tomorrow. As Celeste is having a party, I am quite sure she cannot accept. In fact, she is having one party at home from 2:30 until 5 and then chases to town at great speed to attend a supper party somebody in town is giving. And J. H. doesn't like to go out to dine at noon. As I had already accepted the Rand invitation extended last week or sometime back, I shall be the only one of the local citizenry present.

I told Clemence I had been casting about the cotton patch for her in hopes she might see the picture. She said she wanted to go to Little River and that she would probably see the picture some other time anyway. To that I agreed, delighted, withal, that she did not seem in the least disappointed that she had missed the show. I suppose she must be about the only star of a film who never did see herself on the screen and is really quite indifferent about the whole thing. Somehow it all reminds me of a criticism somebody once made of one of her pictures of a cotton wagon, drawn by a mule and driven by a field hand, for the critic remarked that the man in the picture appeared larger than the mule to which the artist concurred, remarking without intention of flippancy but nevertheless delivering a devastating wallop that, "come to think of it, most mens I know is more important than a mule". I sure liked that one.

I didn't get far with either yesterday's mail or today's, although I did glance at an air mail from Dora which I shall enclose. The latter part suggests that The Bluff isn't likely to remain a resting place for Dora very long.

As for Miss Denhome's note, it speaks for itself.

I believe a Talking Books Topics came to hand in print form today. If I can set hand to it, I shall enclose it herewith. Tomorrow will be a bang-up day, I reckon, what with going out to dinner and then having a flock of people here in the afternoon. I shall read a little to night but probably fold comparatively early, and may as much be said for Lyme....

0085

7365

Wednesday, May 18th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Every once in a while everything seems to get all mixed up and certain people all confused. At the moment I am both.

One contributing factor to this is the fact that I got around to open the second of two air mail letters coming to hand the other day from Dora. In the one I opened a couple of days back, there was a check for twenty dollars, as a gesture of sharing some of the expenses incurred in putting on the Delgado and Northwestern shows. I was touched by his generosity, thanked him and returned the check, of course.

And today, in opening the second letter which had arrived at the same time as the other, I find a check for fifty dollars with the simple notation: "Happy Birthday".

Now if Aunt "illie had sent five million, I should have thought that quite alright and rushed off to the first bank I encountered for the cashing. But fifty dollars from Dora is something else again.

And another letter of a couple of days back, still unopened, was from Lionel Jeanmard. I took it to be a happy You note, following his visit of last Thursday.

This morning, I was expecting Dr. Rand at 10 o'clock. I saw someone approaching Yucca and went out to greet him, only to discover it was Lionel Jeanmard. He said he had written me that he was bringing Madam Jeanmard and Madame roussard up here on Thursday morning and that they were whisking me off to Natchitoches to have luncheon with them.

As I had agreed to speak at the Rand camp luncheon on grandiflora, I couldn't think of accepting the Jeanmard invitation. But Dr. Rand arrived and as Madame Jeanmard is a daughter of Dr. Rand's former partner, and as all are friends, it was arranged for the Lafayette contingent to go and have a quick look at Natchitoches and return to the camp for the luncheon. The latter, as usual, was a banquet, and



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there were lots of people but not nearly enough to balance off the mountains of food. There were three servants scurrying about, two from the Alexandria household and Clemence from here.

And between this paragraph and the above, Carolyn telephoned from Baton Rouge. She is planning to pass this way on Thursday, the morrow, and then go to New Orleans for the week end. The point of coming up here before leaving for the Crescent City is to have me lend her a hand on the article for Colliers and to get some pictures for an article on the Cane River series to send to the Houston Chronicle. She seems to be cooking up something with Look Magazine in mind, making use of pictures Sister Frances Jerome didn't use in her book on the mulatto situation. How the 21 scripts covering virtues of the Kennon Administration are going, if any, I didn't ask. I don't see how she can possibly do much of a job on them, what with all the other stuff that is brewing, although the various items outside the 21 scripts is stuff that has been pretty well whipped together in days gone by. She doesn't want to send the stuff in without having my name with her on the "By Line" but I insist on on remaining anonymous, and, parenthetically, mighty curiously spelled to boot.

Ora telephoned this morning to say she had seen the TV broadcast, and found the pictures rather on the dark side but was delighted that it had been accomplished and that at least two of the Henrys had seen it. I have heard not a peep from either of them about it but I am forever hoping that if the place is viewed a sufficiently number of times by them in varying perspectives, a dim light may eventually dawn on them that there is really something to Melrose that is worth a second thought.

Celeste was perfectly delighted this morning when I took her an armful of grandiflora magnolias to decorate with for her afternoon party. She planned using cape jessamine as the dominant floral decors but later in the morning sent to ask if she might have an armful of day lilies in different color combinations. I could supply them. When I passed by for coffee, she asked me to see her floral arrangements. I thought them very lovely but found it odd that in placing half a dozen grandiflora magnolias in a silver pitcher in the fireplace in the living room, she had placed a fine mesh fire screen in front of the opening, thus guaranteeing few people would ever see them and at the same time guaranteeing that all their perfume would go up the chimney. Her party ended at 5:30 and she was off to another party in town by 6.

And so all of us squirrels go 'round and 'round and now I go to bed.....

7367

Thursday, May 19th, 1955.

Memorandum:

A quieter day than yesterday, thanks primarily to a slow drizzle this afternoon, continuing into tonight.

I had an opportunity to run through some outstanding mail this morning and although none of it appears very vital, I shall send along a couple of samples herewith or under separate cover.

While we were in the midst of dinner, --Eugene and I,-- he remarked that two gentlemen were coming in the front gate. I stepped out in the direction of the big oak and was astonished to encounter, --of all people,--Cliff yrd and his friend, Guy. They had been in South Louisiana vacationing and were heading toward Shreveport when they stopped off here to say Howdy. They would not partake of food but did have a spot of coffee and were then off again on their homeward journey. I heard no news of interest and suppose I delivered nothing too fascinating for their delectation.

Carolyn came sometime before supper and we dove straight into the article designed for Colliers. It seems to me it all fitted rather neatly together but that is not saying that Colliers will think so. Frankly, I wish we might beat Rosalind to publication in that magazine in view of the somewhat snide way she went about getting information on Clemence. If she dashes off her articles for magazine with the same speed she finishes portraits, it will probably be years before she really gets going.

I learned from Carolyn that somebody in the Baton Rouge office sees Margaret McDonald frequently in Shreveport and I'm sorry Carolyn let the person know she was in communication with Houston and its Chronicle on the Clemence story. Of course, the Houston article has been contracted for but I should have been as happy if la McDonald didn't know that until after the Cane River series of plates has been printed in the Shreveport Paper. I gave Carolyn some photos of



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the Cane "iver series to go with the Houston article to be submitted. I think it possible the Cane iver series might be considered too much a pure Louisiana subject for Texas readers but it will do no harm to submit the article regardless since it is about all wrapped up anyway.

I was interested to learn that Margaret McDonald got two out of twelve prizes award for journalism last year, which seems like a pretty good tally for one writer in a field wherein so many people participate.

I am rather surprised at the amount of work Carolyn apparently accomplished within the last couple of weeks. I am attributing the volume to the fact that she is tied to Baton Rouge b her job and apparently doesn't go out much, leaving her some extra time after her TV scripts are completed and she reports she is ahead of schedule which seems remarkable in view of the other articles she has turned out. Perhaps she is most creative in the writing field when she is forced to "stay-put" so that the energies otherwise spent in road running is channeled into the typewriter.

If I can find Bob's letter, you will find it entertaining as usual. Should I not find it for present enclosure, I would mention that he says it is going on some NBC program, by one Gargway, or some such name with which I am unfamiliar. It is a morning thing, I believe he said, and is estimated to reach about four million people.

What seems important about all this is the fact that immediately after the Louisiana shows, the nation will get a taste of the film and the realization that our greatest contemporary primitive painter is a negress may in some magical way tend to open a little wider the door of consideration on the part of some of the four million listeners.

I saw the ladies a few minutes at the coffee hour this morning and was delighted to learn from Celeste that both her own party and the one of somebody else which she attended, following her own, were both perfectly darling. But she couldn't linger in long over the cups as she was scheduled for another party at someone's camp up the river. So things turn and so I fold without the pleasure of any wedding tonight.....

7369

Friday, May 20th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Another day, another week approaches its close and I'm pleasantly tired and shall not be sorry, although we need no moisture at the moment, if the Weather Bureau's prediction proves correct, --windily scattered showers for Saturday.

Last night the rain gage measured a rainfall of five eighths of an inch on my gate by the big pot. This is rather remarkable, what with 3 and a half inches falling from Shreveport to Natchitoches and from Cloutierville to Alexandria. We, it appears, turned out to be a thin strip of the dry section between the "widely scattered showers".

Carolyn got off for Lafayette and New Orleans after breakfast, after we had had an opportunity to run through a thing for Colliers and another for Holiday. Both of them seemed to work out pretty well. I also gave her a hand on some particulars for a mulatto article, designed for Look.

I also took the opportunity to advise her to go to her Baton Rouge office daily at 9 a.m. and to leave it at 1 p.m., not returning until the following morning at 9. I demonstrated to her by Hollywood examples that you cannot create script in a business office which is designed rather for the marketing and not the creation of scripts and the commodities of which they are an ingredient.

I also took the opportunity to recommend that when in New Orleans this week end, she telephone Mrs. Kelly, Nina's friend, asking Mrs. Kelly on my behalf if she has heard from Nina recently. On this slim contact, Carolyn, as a neighbor of the Kellys who live in Royal Street, may get an invitation to tea and, if Carolyn plays her cards correctly, it may end up in an invitation to her from Mrs. Kelly to make a South American cruise which Carolyn would love to make, following her round with the present assignment for the 21 movie scripts. We shall see how this shot in the dark works, --if at all, but it's the



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simplest way I can think of for anybody to get a free tour as guest of the wife of the President of the shipping line.

Today's post brought two or three letters of interest. Helon Hughes writes from Lake Charles that she and William are apparently, and at long last, eventually settled for good, I hope. Margaret McDonald writes the Cane River series will be in the special features section of the Shreveport Times either this Sunday or next. She wants to retain some pictures of the plates I sent her for use in an article for some other publication. That is probably all to the good. She gives her consent to the use of her article for Clemence's use should I decide to have it printed or re-printed by Charles.

I hope I can find Irma O'Brien's letter to enclose. From it I gather, although Irma's wording is guarded, that Kay gave Hollywood to understand that they may expect an announcement of her marriage to Dora at some time before long. I feel so positive that this is something Kay is fashioned out of whole cloth in her own mind that it would be laughable, were it not fraught with so many unpleasant after effects, once she gets back to reality and has to admit to herself, at least, that Dora never had the vaguest notion of proposing to her. What strange cases people of Kay's type insist on stirring up for themselves. Hollywood was in a flutter a couple of years ago when, following Kay's visit, everyone thought I was courting her. Surely that must have come from her presentation of the case. And now comes Dora as the next ingredient for her imaginary romance. I feel it unwise to breathe a word of any of this to Dora who would be the most amazed person in the world, I think, and probably would bolt from The Bluff so abruptly that the Cooper region wouldn't be able to see his vanishing image for dust. How odd that Kay with all her millions seems unable to round up nothing more substantial than a paper dolly of her own imagining to take unto herself as a life companion.

Some lady by the name of Mrs. Nott of Cadiz Street, New Orleans, write to ask if she may acquire either of or any one of the several titles of Clementine canvases appearing in the Delgado show, and if so, at what price. I shall answer she may not, as all those are from private collections, but that she may buy others at about twenty five bucks a throw.

So turns the week, so busy for us both, I am sure, and may there be a measure of respite at Lyme for a whole day of relaxation.....

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Sunday, May 22nd, 1955.

Memorandum:

A lovely week end, a little too humid perhaps but the temperature about right, --90 in the day time, upper 60's at night. Never did the cotton on one side of the fence and weeds on my side appear so lusty at this stage of the season. The flowers are pretty, too.

Along about 2 o'clock this afternoon, --quarter of to be exact, I was going a mile a minute on this keyboard when someone tapped at my closed door. On opening it, I saw a little girl standing there, a white child, who said:

"Good evening.....my name is Ellen Rand and I am Mrs. Rand's granddaughter.....how do you do....."

And I said:

"Well, I declare, if it isn't my old friend Ellen Lockett and am I delighted to see you."

I suppose she must be about 9 years old by now but it very short for her age.

She then asked if she might present her friend, a boy of about her age, I believe, but a little taller. He was just as old fashionedly sedate as Ellen and it was fun talking with them. Mary Fringle had brought them over from the camp and as Mary wanted to take some color shots and as the children wanted to inspect the plantation buildings, I said Goodbye to them tentatively, as I had a pilgrim appointment at the front gate. They had to leave before I was well started with my tour but they selected a path that would take them close to where my pilgrims and I were standing and Ellen approached me, saying:

"I apologize for interrupting you but I simply must tell you what a pleasure it has been to see you again...."

Her companion followed suit, and I marvel yet at



7372

the charm their good manners exuded.

Ora telephoned this morning to say the article on the Cane River plates did not appear in today's Shreveport Times but that the Wenks made the Society page in a photograph which will put in the mail for me. She also said the May 21st issue of the Saturday Evening Post has some pictures of Middleton Place gardens and she read me a caption or two. I was impressed when she read that the Middleton Gardens, a few miles above Charleston, etc., etc., and I stopped her right there, for the last time I saw the Middleton Place gardens, they were still on the Ashley River which is down South from Charleston and while the word "above" doesn't matter, still above in this instance suggests to the North to me, as I believe it would be interpreted by most readers, and if we went North of Charleston, we would be on the Cooper and if we were to find ourselves on the Cooper, we would most certainly drop in for a go at things at the Bluff.

Rosalind also called this morning. She says the mother-in-law of the Governor of Arkansas is coming to visit her for a couple of days and has asked in advance if she may be accorded a go-round at Melrose. I gave Rosalind a date for Thursday at 2 p.m. Rosalind says she has a couple of weeks of work straightening up income taxes, etc., and that after that, she is planning a vacation trip back to Georgia with her mother. Following her turn, she hopes to do some writing, although she didn't mention any subject in particular. I told her, --and I can't think how I dragged up this one, that I thought it high time somebody did a biography of Mrs. Godey of Lady Book fame and I thought America deserved a biography of this lady whose beautifully reproduced fashion plates of the 1850's, 1860's and 1870's deserved something of the sort. For all I know, perhaps a dozen biographies have been done of Madam Godey but I thought that ought to be a chore for Rosalind, sufficiently involved in research, to keep her off the Cane River country.

And so runs out the week, pleasant and uneventful, giving me ample opportunity to turn my telepathy machine Northeastwardly, projecting unending thoughts that things might be wonderfully peaceful at Lyme and that little Miss Lee, at long last, might be catching a breather. But if that didn't happen, I'm hoping she will not try writing until she has had time to catch her breath, knowing full well that all is understood and therefore loved.....

7373

the newspaper clipping of yesterday containing Clemence business at the college should have had the enclose streamed attached.

Monday, May 23rd, 1955.

Memorandum: Cloudy and cool all day, so cloudy that noon seemed almost like first dark, and the thermometer, predicted for a stand of 90, only made 70. Three and a half inches of rain cascaded down in Hatchitoches and not a drop at Melrose. I suppose it will be sunny and warm for tomorrow since tonight the weather bureau says it will be cool with widely scattered showers.

The incoming mail was scant. I enclose a letter which gives a brief impression of things at Briarwood.

To hand came "Madame de Pompadour" by Nancy Medford, or some such name. I sampled a couple of pages, getting the scene set for the appearance of the lady herself, although she hasn't made her bow as yet. I am most favorably impressed by the way the biographer handles the enormous amount of research, patent in the first chapter, and exceedingly well handled in the process of boiling down the infinite to sizeable proportions.

In reading it, I found myself wanting to read the first chapter of A. Maurois' "Lelia" once more.

I learned one thing from the present volume that I was glad to have settled in my mind, --the Chateau d'Etiolles no longer exists. I have explored the Forest of Senart in that region to the left of Versailles as one faces the Grand Canal, --the forest beginning beyond the "piece d'eau des Suisses", but never could find the property. This book says that this lovely place was dismantled early in the present century by the owner who wanted to avoid paying taxes on the building which, you will agree, is one excuse for getting rid of one of the loveliest places in the world. I get my mail finished tonight before getting too sleepy, perhaps I shall learn some other things I have been wanting to find out.



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7374

Static has been so concentrated during the past two or three days that I haven't been able to keep up much with world news. I did hear some reference to evangelist, Billy Graham, being bidden to dine at Windsor with the Queen and I approved of that. Obviously this will lend success to the Graham campaign in Great Britain in thus being received at table by the head of the Episcopal Church, and it will undoubtedly broaden the Queen's popularity among the ranks of her subject who do not belong to the Established Church.

From the sublime to the ridiculous, another lady might be mentioned at this point, --the widow Carter. Miss Maude appeared at Frenchie's honkey tonk, as from out of nowhere and had a high old time for herself. She spent Saturday night, or Sunday morning, with Pearl Lorenz, widow of my one time barber, and then faded from sight. It is assumed she may have gone back to Alexandria where she has relatives. What a checkered career Miss Maude continues to carve out for herself.

I don't recall if I mentioned that Celeste has some new dining room chairs which are quite pretty. They are rather 1st Empire or perhaps almost Directoire in line and are made of mahogany, with the seat upholstered in velvet, -- green in coloring, and I don't ask me why the green was used. She told me she had them made in New Orleans and paid only 65 dollars a piece for them. But while she likes the chairs alright, still she is very discontented about domestic matters in general because she wants J. H. to let her summon in an interior decorator from New Orleans or Shreveport and have him do the entire house over, just as one or two of her friends have had done recently. I am reminded of Lyle's observation that there was but one way to handled the decorating job in that house successfully and that he thought he himself could do it, the first requisite being that one burn down the place to begin with, after which a structure could be erected and the thing properly decorated. I think he had a point.

In view of that surprising hint in Irma O'Brien's letter of a few days back, concerning romance at The Bluff, I must confess I am beginning to hold the thought that what I wish might be true but know full well is impossible, might actually come to pass. I seem to be as bad as Kay, --she thinking up the whole thing and I trying to fashion the stuff into fact.

But let me attack my mail now and then for a brief go-round with Mme. d'Etiole and so to bed.....

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7375

Tuesday, May 24th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Full summer is upon us, hot and humid and cloudless. It rained again last night in Hatchitoches, bringing up their 24 hour amount to 5 and one half inches. We didn't get a drop.

The post remains a little on the thin side but this letter, enclosed, speaks for itself. As nothing in it reveals the slightest suggestion of any romance on Dora's part, I continue to believe that the California report is bound to be based on some wishful thinking on Kay's part. I am almost tempted to write Dora that should he find himself in Charleston some day, he might try giving me a buzz. But in such cases, one never knows if acquainting the innocent by-stander with the potentials flowering at his feet would contribute something helpful of tumultuous. Perhaps I had better let Fate or Fortune contend for priority in this matter. Heaven knows, I went through enough effecting the initial contact.

A pause between this paragraph and the above to answer the telephone. Somebody from 60 miles up the road from the town whose name I can never spell, something like Coushatta, asking for an appointment for tomorrow afternoon or herself and a flock of biddies. Imagine. And guess if I didn't say But No.

I read a few more pages the Random House publication on Madame de Pompadour and picture both my surprise and delight when I ran across a statement that contradicted the one glaring crime of which she had so long been accredited with in my mind, the one deed that somehow always seemed almost unforgivable, --the destruction of the Grand Staircase of the Ambassadors. In the present volume, it sets forth quite plainly that after the popularity of the private theatricals warranted greater space for their presentations, the little apartments were abandoned for the hall of the staircase of the



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Ambassadors. It seems that two occasions during the years required the use of this staircase for formal receptions and that accordingly moveable partitions were contrived so that this hall could be used whenever theatricals were in order, with the setting up of this theatre within the hall requiring 16 hours to effect and 14 hours to remove in its entirety. And so the one puzzle in the matter of good taste has at long last been solved and it is with pleasure that I shall now have to look for a new person at whom I may level an accusing finger.

I had coffee with Madam Regard this morning alone, Celeste having gone to town. The place is in a tizzy, what with another party for 20 tomorrow afternoon when, oddly, it seems, I also have another Alexandria Garden Club on the same day, as before.

I learned from Madam Regard that Pearl Lorenz had chatted with them as they left Church this morning. She said that Miss Laude had come to Hatchitoches by train on Saturday, dragging two or three suit cases with her and had bummed a ride down Cane River as far as Frenchie's, after which she had come to Pearl's house and installed herself in the same night. Opening one of her suitcases, she had extracted some money and betaken herself to the honkey-tonk at the end of the bridge, loaded up with liquor and returned to Pearl's house. It seems somebody, I don't know the identity of the person, telephoned the Sheriff who came and took her to town and that she is now still resting in the Hatchitoches jail. Lord, what a doings in such a short time after so many years of preparations for just such a business.

As for the newspaper clipping enclosed, it speaks for itself, both pictorially and through its caption. Dan was here for dinner today and mentioned having seen it and said he thought somebody in Hatchitoches ought to send it to Joe, just to make him happy. No doubt somebody will and Joe will have fits at encountering it.

Some Houston pilgrims passing this way today, in response to my inquiry, said they had read last Sunday's Houston Chronicle but had seen no article about Clemence. Perhaps the Editor put off the publication for a week on that subject, even as the Shreveport Times did on the Cane River business.

My radio died sometime during the day and so I am looking forward to reading a little later tonight, what with no news casts to entice me to folding up by 10.....

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Wednesday, May 25th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Fair warm and humid with just enough wind from the Gulf to sop up some of the humidity with the rising and falling breezes.

A hundred hoe hands are swinging their ancient instruments across the endless cotton rows but the cotton is growing so fast that there will be little more need for hoeing and already J. H. is beginning to toss me field hands over and beyond the number he knows what to do with. The greater dampness this Spring has given the bamboo and marvelous impulse to travel both vertically and horizontally and so I am glad to have some extra strong arms to smack it back into its normal confines.

Thanks to the absence of my radio last night, I lingered longer at my reading machine, finding the Pompadour biography much to my liking. The work certainly demonstrates, among other things, that the author has done endless research, boiling down so many sources to a trickle or a drop of essence, representing years of prospecting. The one more thinks about Mme. de Pompadour's contribution to 18th century culture, the more one is convinced that, thanks to her exquisite taste and liberal expenditures, no century probably ever got so much on such a comparatively small investment and the greater is the pity the nation didn't have sense enough to preserve more of the creations she sponsored.

At noon, la Montespan telephoned, saying she was calling from Dan's house in town and wondered if I would like to see her. I remarked that as I was expecting to receive the Alexandria Garden Club, I would be having enough baggage on my hands for one afternoon. She pouted at that and asked if Clemence had any pictures she might sell her. I told her I imagined she did. I



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learned from the clerk that she had arrived at the store just as my guests stopped at the front gate and it goes without saying that I was delighted thus to be rid of la bag who, it is said, decided to look up the master, chasing to Little River and thence to Cognac and up and down the river, but apparently never effecting a contact.

At the same time that I was doing a gavotte with my group, Celeste had a party in full swing. I saw no one in the latter group except Dee Hertzog who had come over to the big house to borrow some furniture. She said she is heading into her final year of teaching, --30 years, or some such and will enter upon her pension accordingly at which time she and Celeste plan to enjoy some real vacations together. I suppose both these chick-a-dees will be flyin' off to Paris or some such place, come next year at this time. For as long as I can remember, they have always been going places together, having just the most darling sort of a time, --doing what, I never could learn. One year it was to Cuba, another to Panama, forever cruising some place or other, the most delightful part of it being that it never did seem to matter in which direction they headed out or what they encountered along the way, for it was the traveling part that really matter and what is there to see any place when one arrives any where except darling restaurants and equally darling night clubs and such more profound things which, it would seem, is the only thing making heading out for any place really worth while. Eugene told me that both la Tucker and Dan's wife who was traveling with her, were on the drunk side when they stopped at the store. What a fine pair of huzzies these two are.

To end up a some what hocus-pokus sort of day, the lady doctor came to see me, bringing another lady doctor from New Orleans with her. This was the first time since a year ago Christmas I had seen the lady doctor, I think, and we had much gossiping to do as night closed in and we tried to get her guest around to see the various buildings before the new moon took over completely. She says Zelma has a cancer but that Puny is worse off than Zelma. She thinks Zelma may make it, and I'm so hopeful that this may be the case. I promised to go in to dinner "eventually" with Don and Eleanor but I'm not rushing into a definite date, quiet plantation nights are so much more to my liking that pulling up and down the big road. But the hour approaches for Tender Leaf time, and so I shall knock off some two or three letters and then reach for a treasured "boudon" and collapse in my arm chair, the mental telepathy working over time.....

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Tuesday, May 26th, 1955.

Memorandum:

High winds were added to our assortment of heat and humidity, --20 to 30 mile an hour winds blowing all day, and, it goes without saying, winds that were might heavily laden with top soil and from highway elements of powdery dust.

The radio said something about a tornado or so to the North of us, and it was easily imagined, what with occasional gusts at this bend of the river being such as to blow down the tomato plants in front of Yucca, thereby furnishing me with an excellent excuse to devote much time to staking them in the late afternoon.

It is quite true I cannot put all the blame for the sagging tomato plants on the wind for a stalwart youth, passing this way and while waiting for he, thinking he would demonstrate his friendship by hoeing my vegetables for me, did just that and obviously, swung his instrument a little too close to the tomato root system. But it was time for staking anyway and tonight in the high wind and under a somewhat wan new moon, they are all once more standing up as pert and pretty as a picture.

The mail continues thin but the enclosed letter gives some hint as to how things are whizzing along in the Baton Rouge area, --although only a hint, for according to the latest reports coming to hand though Henry sources, it seems that Kennon is casting about to see how he can persuade Stephen G. Henry to step into his shoes, or at least try to, when Kennon steps down from the Governor's chair.

J. H., probably approached by the Governor during the recent contacts those two gentlemen have had, finds that Stephen would suit the backers of his administration. These gentlemen, among others, are a couple of oil moguls of the Shreveport area. It is they, as I understand it, who are paying for the films on which Carolyn is



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currently laboring, --films that will show the various aspects of State governmental activities, all in a very pleasant light, having in view that said films will influence the voter in the coming election to further whatever successor Kemmon n mes for the race. Some people seem to think Earle Long could be beat but I doubt it. Surely Stephen Henry would be a man of probity, he wouldn't be likely to win the election, I imagine, for an officer of the Ethyl Corporation would have hard going when the Longs opened up their heavy artillery in their fight as hill billies for hill billies, against the planter, big money class.

I had expected Rosalind and some people at 2 this afternoon and I fiddled around in the neighborhood of the side gate until 3, when I got tired to weighting and took up the telephone to call the Aswell household. Rosalind answered and said some of her guests failed to arrive and therefore she had thought of putting of the visit 24 hours. It would have been so thoughtful of her to have advised me accordingly, don't you think so.

I read some more from the Pompadour biography and still find it good. Last night I got around to the staircase of the Ambassadors. The author says that in re-assigning apartments in Versailles, Louis XV was determined to have his daughters, Henriette and Victoire in easy communication with his apartment and that therefore, the, the King, ordered that the great staircase be r placed by apartments for these two daughters of his.

I have no doubt that this may be true and should like to think so, since it would neatly solve the puzzle which has forever troubled me in regard to Mme. de Pompadour. Still, I am not unmindful of the fact that L. Marquise and her brother were exercising a tremendous influence for good in building matters on Louis XV, and, had they been much concerned about the Ambassadorial staircase, it seems to me, they might have persuaded the King to treat it as one of the great architectural triumphs of the 17th century Versailles. But then, no 18th century architects ever seemed to comprehend what Louis XIV had been doing and perhaps it was more than one could expect that the staircase and other features, such as the original courtyard, should have been treated as sacrosanct.

I'm going to be early tonight, what with a slight sore throat, but some sperin tablets will set me straight again, I think, and in a jiffy.....

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Friday, May 27th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Our full summer weather continues, hot, boistrous winds, dust and a cloudless sky.

I was able to follow more or less the general pattern I had envisioned although unexpected incidents put in a few twists.

Early this morning I learned that Miss Cammie's only brother, Stephen Garrett, had died last evening at his home in New Roads.

News had come through sometime during the evening and the Wenks, who had been reached by telephone, appeared at Melrose in the persons of Sister and Lloyd around 8 o'clock. Dan came down from town with Celeste's nephew, Joe Regard, of New Iberia, who chanced to be in Hatchitoches, and J. H., Celeste, Dan, Sister and Lloyd left here around 10 for New Roads where they were to meet S. G. Henry and wife from Baton Rouge, bringing an Episcopal minister with them to perform the service. The funeral was scheduled for 4 o'clock and I suppose the whole posse may have returned to Melrose by now and I hope those other than J. H. and Celeste are not lingering here. I write at 9:45 and see no light at the big house which may or may not mean anything.

As for myself, I was a-stir at 4:20 and accordingly had done enough before my first appointment for the day at 8 a.m. I had another at 9:30 and before I had terminated it, I was surprised to see Carolyn appear, bearing the Hunter canvas in the Theodore Rousseau that graced the Delgado show. As there had been nothing in Carolyn's letter suggesting she contemplated being here, her appearance was quite unexpected. She was heading for Marshall and had stopped off here to leave the Delgado item. It seems she had a thousand dollar note to pay at the end of the month and in a New Orleans or Baton Rouge restaurant, had overheard some oil men say that something was stirring in the Marshall neighborhood concerning rights of way,



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and on speaking to the men, found they had mutual acquaintances and they advised her she could get a thousand dollars on something about Old Bonita land if she consulted with one of the officials of the company, then in Marshall. And so she was heading in that direction, - again demonstrating her ability to keep half a jump ahead of the bill and tax collector. She seemed satisfied with the progress her script writing and has a dozen other schemes up her sleeve. She remained for luncheon only and then was off in the direction of Shreveport and Texas.

Clemence was waiting for me in the arden after I handed Carolyn into her horseless carriage and we chatted a moment on the Yucca gallery before Rosalind arrived with a few delightful ladies. Rosalind was only an hour or two ahead of schedule which did not upset me and I was glad to have them make around and get going, as I had a flock of things I wanted to do during the balance of the evening, such as tying up more tomato plants and so on.

I read a little a little later than I had anticipated last night both because I had no radio and because I was approaching the end of the biography of Jeanne Poisson Etioles de Pompadour. I liked the book and shall read it again before long. It is one of the few books about the 18th century that are available for me in the recorded version.

The re-reading will afford me pleasure in merely hearing familiar old names and places mentioned again, although by that I do not mean to imply I did not learn things I did not know before in this reading. One of the odd bits of information coming to hand therein had to do with, --of all things-- mayonaise. According to the biographer, Marché Richelieu was storming the Island of Minorca during the 7 years war when his cook found himself without cream for his greasings, -- the cook bearing the name of Mahon. He was a resourceful cook, too, it would appear, for it was Mahon who, in lieu of cream, stirred eggs and oil and stuff together and brought forth what we day are pleased to call mayonaise, which apparently should rightfully be spelled Mahonaise.

And so this last week in May comes to its final week end, -- a busy month all around, and doubly so in Lyme. I am holding the thought that the impending week end may be all that has been contemplated with so much fervor for so long.....

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Sunday, May 29th, 1955.

Memorandum:

I'm not sure if this memo will go forward on Monday or not. What with Memorial Day being a legal holiday, the postman may or may not make a round. I have never been able to figure out just how the United States Post Office reacts to national holidays, for sometimes the rounds are made and sometimes they aren't.

In view of the fact that both Friday and Saturday saw no in-coming 1st class mail, Tuesday's pouch ought to be fairly heavy.

The weather continues perfect, with a brilliant sun by day and a waning moon by night. A breath of cool air blew down from the Rockies Saturday night and today was a pleasant mid 80, which, along with the sunshine, brought forth too many pilgrims and all of them of the uninteresting type. I turned several back out of sheer exhaustion.

As was to be expected, the aftermath of the Stephen Garrett funeral proved to be a pure hurly burly. Dan, on the way home, finished off a bottle of whiskey and wouldn't give Sister a drop. It appears she needed none as she had succeeded in fortifying herself prior to beginning the homeward trek, --but was not satisfied and clamored for more. The party stopped in Alexandria for food but she sent everything back by the same waiter who served it, and on reaching Melrose, was apparently in a pretty disagreeable frame of mind. If you can imagine Madam Regard explaining to me that "Sister raised Hell", you can readily judge, as can I, what an uproar there must have been across the fence.

I think they got home about 8 o'clock, and the rumpus went on until after 10. She asked for whiskey and then wouldn't part ke of any, saying she didn't like the cheap stuff which J. H. provided for Celeste and her guests. Madam Regard said that everybody was utterly exhausted when Sister and Lipud headed out for Shreveport, taking Dan as far as Hatchitoches with them.



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Carmen telephoned me from town this morning to say there was a piece in the Shreveport Times about the plates. She read it to me over the 'phone. It seemed to be about the usual newspaper line with the customary number of errors. I shall probably obtain a copy for enclosure in the morning and if I don't, there will undoubtedly be one available by Tuesday.

I was sorry to learn at dinner that Eugene, the clerk, had caught a finger in the lawn mower which he was operating in his yard in town this morning. I believe some stitches were required but I think he did not lose any joints, I hope.

At 5:30, I collapsed, after too many pilgrims, thinking I would read a page or two and sip a coke the while. At just as I started, I saw some woman heading toward the Yucca gallery. I put down my glass with a view of going to drive her back to the front gate when I discovered that it was Carolyn. It seems she was heading for Baton Rouge and had stopped off to say Howdy, and was on her way again within the hour. It turns out that she got a thousand dollars for the right of way thing at Old Conita and as she has a note coming due to that amount the first of the month, she is all set against that payment. She plans to spend much more time in New Orleans and Baton Rouge henceforth, as she is ahead of schedule on the TV scripts.

Yesterday morning, J. H. had gone to see the carving that Alton Johnson had been doing, both at his home up the road and at school and I recommended to Carolyn that on one of her trips between New Orleans and Marshall, she pass this way to get some shots of Alton before the summer has played out for he graduated from High School this last semestre and plans to go to college this autumn on one of the General Motors scholarships, won during the past year. I want to get some good pictures of him at his work for a long side little Miss Clemence, such a gifted personality ought to make interesting copy for more than one article on the thriving of Art in the river country.

J. H. said Alton is sending off another car model to General Motors either on Monday or Tuesday and J. H. who thought me a bit wacky a year or two back when I sang the youth's artistic abilities now thinks he has really discovered a rising star. Well, so go this Memorial Day week end. I'm so hopeful it may have brought endless peace and relaxation to Lyme.....

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Monday, May 30th, 1955.

Memorandum:

A perfectly lovely day in these parts. I am so much hoping it may have been equally so in Lyme.

As you will judge from the presence of two memos in a single envelope, the postman did not make his rounds. Eugene, his arm in a sling, did bring the incoming mail from you Natchez, however. But, so far as I was concerned with the latter, it made scant difference, since only a card from Kate Perkins came to hand.

Somehow I had been half expecting half a dozen letters but I'm hoping everybody was too busy making preparations for a prolonged week end frolic to set hand to paper, although I worry a little about Bob and Patty, what with the baby due in July and Bob not feeling too well when last he wrote. It seems odd, too, that Mrs. Stirling hasn't advised me about the closing of her shop, but perhaps she has been too busy closing it to seal any envelopes. And as for Lionel Jeanmard, perhaps he is too busy entertaining travelers to get a round to check writing, although his payment of the last couple of pictures I sent him a week or two back would come in handy in view of a new project I am contemplating.

And the new project struck me this morning. I thought it would be nice to have Clemence do some murals for the African House. J. H. liked the idea and said he would pay for the wall boards, -- a step but only a step, of course in the right direction. He is so quick on the trigger that before I had turned around, he had summoned up a truck and sent it to town with instructions to drop by the lumber company. Then he consulted me on what I wanted. I told him I wanted sixty feet in length and four feet in width and gave him a sample. He must have telephoned the order for within half an hour, the truck was back with the proper footage but the thickness of the board wasn't up to my sample. But I think I shall be able to use it alright, although it will require a dab of re-enforcing. J. H. said he would have a good carpenter come to measure for the proper moldings and the installation of the murals. His latter offer seemed a little pre-mature,



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however, as it would seem to be better to get the murals painted before getting them framed. I shall be curious to see how la Hunter gets along in her initial try at mural painting. She seemed no more taken aback by the suggestion when I pointed out the wall space to her this afternoon than when I handed her the pen to sign the register at Northwestern. And so let Messers Sert and de Rivera look to their laurels and we shall see when we shall see at this bend of the river.

This afternoon I had a long distance call from Baton Rouge. It was the State Mineral Board, --of all things, telephoning to ask me if I could provide them with material for their fight over the tide land oil properties. Naturally, I didn't tell them that I have from the first believed that the royalties should go to the nation as a whole and not to the individual States where much more than would be the case in Federal control of the money, most of it would be squandered by local politicians for repairing their own political fences, once the States got control. One thing must be dreadfully apparent, --that the State is grasping at any straw if they have to call me to toss them a life line.

The fruits of Sunday's article in the Shreveport Times bore more fruit in the form of pilgrims, if nothing else, today. I had them from Arkansas, Texas and Louisiana. There were even two groups from Natchitoches, one of the latter numbering 9 and arriving at ten minutes before noon. I haven't the vaguest notion as to when people in town break bread in the mid-day period but if I lived there, I should imagine I should hesitate about storming any place in pilgrims' garb at ten minutes of twelve.

J. H. just appeared in the frame of my open door, clad in a shirt and shorts and slippers. He was a sight. He had asked me at supper if I thought the boards alright. I said I thought so but that they were a little on the thin side for the purpose. He said he had just been stolling in the moonlight over to the African House and on looking at the boards, found them a little thin. He said he would get a set of heavier ones on the morrow. I told him I would keep these, and while he wants Clemence to make him a regulation size picture, requiring none of the boards but out, I shall probably find ample left to get a murl for, perhaps the bath room at Yucca, and removeable, don't you think so.....

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Wednesday, May 31st, 1955.

Memorandum: Another beautiful, cloudless day, with the thermometer reaching but 84 which, along with a pleasant 10 mile breeze, may out of doors delightful. Tomorrow we are promised a high of 96 which is something else again. The crops look wonderful and the gardens aren't bad, although the latter can stand moisture, --and are getting it.

I had to go to the store early this morning, a little after 6. Imagine my surprise and delight to see J. H. pulling through a catalogue listing paints and artists supplies. He read item after item and we pondered over what we should invest in.

Somehow it all reminded me of the days when Dr. Miller and I used to turn through the order house catalogue when purchasing clothing for fatherless colored children, and I shall never forget the day we had to decide if little girls of 12 would like ice warm long handlebar underwear or if Cane River fashion prohibited such comforts for young ladies in spite of a cold winter, --and old maid and an ancient bachelor trying to figure out such matters.

J. H. said he had come to the conclusion that the wall board we had purchased yesterday wasn't of good enough quality for the purpose we have in mind and that we could exchange it for other fiber that wouldn't cost more than 60 dollars. I told him I would keep what we had purchased yesterday but I didn't tell him that while there was twice as much as would be required for a Yucca mural, the balance of it could be used to advantage during the ensuing season by the local artist when it was properly cut into useable oblongs.

Puny came to see me this evening. The lady doctor had



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asked me the other night when she dropped in to see me had asked me to use what persuasion I could to discourage him from drinking. We had a pleasant chat he declared he wasn't going to drink any more and said Zelma is getting along just fine. It is expected her cancer treatments will be completed within about two weeks and after that she will have her tumor removed and then will be able to come home again. I feel certain you remember her as of one morning while walking along the Bermuda road. I am so fond of her, she is such a real and jolly Aunt Jemima.

Pilgrims, still rippling from Sunday's Times article, continue to make ducks and drakes of my daylight hours. Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas and Oklahoma were on my list and all of them were perfectly dumb. Among other things, some of them said they had a great curiosity to see the man who made the plates and asked if it were possible to do so. Imagine. And the sight of him and his wares must have frightened them off, --one or the other, or both, for nobody left bearing either the man or his wares with them. Verily it is charity when one devotes half his days and three quarters of his energies singing psalms to dead mules.

The post office had a average amount of mail today, following the holiday but, oddly enough, there was nothing for me. This seems particularly strange as a friend posted me a clipping in Saturday's post at Hatchitoches, and it does seem as though a 1st class item ought to be able to make it down here sometimes as between Saturday, Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, what with only 15 miles to travel. One of these days I shall probably be getting a sack full and then I shall complain I can't manage such a plethora.

The latest news concerning the Joe Henry plans is that they are in a state of fluidity. June 20th was the magical date mentioned latest, with one week to be spent away from the Dakotas. On the supposition that that week will be divided between Louisiana and Texas, after which he threatens to take his wife back to Dakota with him for a little vacation on her part. Hummmmmmmmm.

So runs a dull memo in a dull day's doings, and May comes to a close, a busy month all around but holding dabs of happiness, I hope, for little Miss Lee, as it did for Lestan.....

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Wednesday, June 1st, 1955.

Memorandum:  
How nice to find your lovely letter of the 28th in today's post.

I continue to receive an exceedingly thin trickle of correspondence, which also continues to seem odd, but as I receive mail from but one source that really counts, today's post was all I wanted and I thank you for having made my day so happy.

And may I thank you for all the kind things you had to say about the Lestan doings of late. It is so sweet of you to speak so kindly of his efforts. And in response to your expressed wish that

.....Dr. Acree, friend of Dr. Mellon, of New Orleans and Dr. Nicholson, a friend of Dr. Acree, had to take the Cane River road when in this section of the State, and have a moonlight tour while pausing to say Howdy. What with J. H. in his shirts and shorts appearing at my door one moonlight night this week and these two physicians on another night, my usual 100 per cent solitude, coming with darkness, seems to be getting pretty well blasted this week.

But a couple of hours back, I had started to express my appreciation to you for having acquainted me with a social event that transpired recently and how it somehow lacked substance in spite of the general gaiety characterizing all anniversaries of this kind.

Years and years ago I came to the conclusion that such arrangements as referred to may well be transformed from a liability into an asset, or, to express in slightly differently, such developments somehow pan out as seeming handicaps, but which, if handled with measured acceptance, may well turn out



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as do other handicaps, little short of the gravel ingredients going into the cement foundations of an edifice which can be brought into lines so as to produce a positive basic support rather than an over-whelming annoyance and shattering force. It would seem that in large measure, God so miraculously arranges things to the end that one individual may endow one element with vital force whereas another individual may appraise the same thing correctly by determining it to have no value whatsoever, and the same stone jutting out from a facade, may utterly ruin its appearance whereas another architect may efface the thing and so incorporate it within the frame work of one's existences as to make it a mighty contributor to strength. And yet another may treat it as worry of crowning prominence and convert it into a wonderfully beautifully carved acanthus capitoll, - in all these and a thousand other instances, the individual of wisdom easily dominating the decision as to what will be made of the thing which circumstances has contrived to create, working in the handicap so as to make it serve rather than a source of suffering in the long run. Creative artists appear in such a variety of roles and I don't mind saying I am inundated with admiration for the fashion in which the master-builder of Lyme moves steadily forward, never failing to make the most of the materials at hand and by adroitness of craftsmanship, extracting a maximum of happiness out of materials which mighty few others would ever have the vaguest notion as to how they should be handled.

I want to talk with you some more about the records, referred to in your letter. I find them, --the folk songs, so wonderfully presented by the voice and harp accompaniment and their message so LaFontaine like in its charming simplicity. They are, in fact, of that same classic simplicity, - in the LaFontaine manner, come to think of it, and for that reason, I suppose, they will forever be turned to again and again with so much satisfaction.

I sent for Clemence this morning. Anyone else would have been palled by the extent of murals I had envisioned for the painting. She was just exactly as non-chalant as the day I handed her the pen at the Fine Arts building, requesting her signature. It was so apparent she accept the proposal as something she wouldn't mind at all doing in so far as she could, and she certainly was manifesting no tizzy about something she couldn't undertake. A primitive mural, painted by a descendant of Africa in an African building, --that really will be original, and, perhaps, arresting.....

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Thursday, June 2nd, 1955.

Memorandum: A beautiful summer's day, cloudless, the thermometer in the 90's and a promise for more warmth on the morrow. When the post arrived this morning, I thought of old Captain Shreve and the destruction of the great Red River raft, for the back log of expected and unexpected letters came to hand in such a torrent that I was unable to read but a portion of them. Before glancing at Bob's letter, you will be interested to learn that when the Picayune announced the forth-coming Hunter show at the Delgado, --I suppose the pre-exhibition date was probably sometime in April, none other than your friend, Clarence John Laughlin telephoned Alanzo Landsford at the Museum and went to great trouble to explain that he was the discoverer of Clementine Hunter, that he had fine photographs of all her paintings and although he would accordingly be in a position to help promote the exhibition greatly, he wanted the Museum to understand distinctly then and there that since he had not been consulted about arranging the show in the first place, he absolutely refused to have anything to do with the event when it opened in May and that he did not want the Museum or anyone connected with it to call on him in any way for his assistance.

As Director of the Delgado, A. Landsford, Esquire, assured Clarence John that the Museum would in no way approach him on anything connected with the show.

With this in mind, the news passed along in Bob's letter, arriving today, seems to suggest that Clarence John is still in something of a tizzy. And if, as he set forth in April, he wanted to have nothing to do either with the show or the Hunter paintings, it seems



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as though he must be more nuts than I had supposed him to be, in thus taking up the Hunter business with Bob. So far as both little Miss Hunter and I are concerned, Clarence John can go and sit on a tack.

Dora's letter fails to reveal anything suggesting a romance either between him and Kay or between him and South Carolina. Surely the Hollywood O'Briens must have been vastly misled by Kay on her picture of an impending nuptials or else they misunderstood her wonderfully. Obviously Dora is determined to make mighty little of the Cooper River potentials and I had better charge off as failure my efforts for his security in that direction.

At supper J. H. said he would try to have the African House canvases or Masonite or plywood sections brought down from town on the morrow. He doesn't realize I think, that if the murals are achieved, they will undoubtedly cause something of a sensation in the Art world but it will be time enough for him to find that out later. Sufficient it is that he has manifested the interest he has.

I spent much of my day measuring and sawing beaverboard pieces for the Yucca bathroom murals. It is something of a job but I have that part of the undertaking about finished and Clemence has one section at home with which she is fiddling. As she hasn't the vaguest notion as to what a mural may be and as she prefers to work at night, --I can't have her carrying on in my bath all the darker hours, and as she declared today, she simply has to stand over her canvases and not reach up to them, it will be a miracle within a miracle if either or both of the African House and Yucca House paintings ever pan out. ut it is worth trying, regardless of the results.

I am happy to report that the belle peppers are beginning to flower and the tomato plants look wonderfully healthy as do the egg plants. They respond to a bit of attention with such gusto, it is fun to watch them jump, following each hoeing.

I am still the happier today because of your elegant letter of the 28th in yesterday's post. Again my thanks for making both yesterday and today so happy.....

1887

7393

Friday, June 3rd, 1955.

Memorandum:

Our summer weather continues, - hot-hot and even the planters concede a little pin point sprinkle might do no harm.

The in-coming mail continues its volume o yesterday, in sharp contrast to last week, and in view of the usual paucity of correspondence, --from the Bluff, --you may well imagine how impressed I was when I noticed three from that quarter, each in a different hand. I have had poor secretarial assistance today, but I think I have made out the general tenor of each, although I shall go into them more carefully over the week end.

Dora's began in this arresting manner:

"Dear Francois,  
Katheleen and I are going to be married in Savannah on June 15th....."

Well, you could have knocked me down with a fender.

And so it would appear that my frantic telegrams and telephones to Florida a few months back weren't really in vain.

Dora enclosed a check for one hundred dollars to cover incidentals in Savannah, as I am requested to be among those present.

La Storm wrote to say she would like to make the trip a treat on her and that she would send me plane transportation.

Kay wrote and nice letter and revealed one fact I had cast about for during the past 12 years, --the date, or rather the natal day of Dora which turns out to be May 31st.

And so, before I call it a day, -- there are so many letters to be written tonight, I shall send three air mails to The Bluff, one in which I shall return Dor's check al- though I should love to cash it for the African House murals but think I should not, since it was sent for another purpose, and



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a letter of congratulations and love to Katheleen, and  
a third to la Storm, saying, "But, thank you, No," for the  
plane transportation to the East coast.

this morning a couple of hours before mail time, J. H. sent  
servant to ask if I could go to town with him. I could.  
We drove directly to the lumber company and I selected  
wooded plywood boards for the murals. At one point, the  
director of the place remarked that this or that type was rather  
high in price. J. H. said:

"The price is of no matter at all.....Francois wants some board  
whatever he selects will be the only thing to pay any attention to.

which I thought sweet of him. But with workmen to prepare the  
preliminary and final settings, the enormous amounts of paints  
required and the money which should be advanced to the artist  
are things which I wish might be accomplished with equal ease.  
Perhaps they will be.

And so it appears that projects for May in this year of grace  
have been wonderfully successful. I am so glad for  
Clemence, who deserves everything coming to her, for  
Kay who ought to have a good husband and for Dora who should  
have financial worries removed from his life forever.

Sombody remarked the other day that it was a mighty long  
bamboo pole that could be manipulated from the Yucca garden  
and so managed as to push open the door of the Delgado Museum  
300 miles away but now it appears that the same job of bamboo  
could push many times that distance with a fair amount  
of success, too. I feel so parental in my happiness in knowing  
that Dora will no longer be worried about comforts, and like  
a parent, I know have that sensation of finding it a step easier  
to die, knowing that at least one particular worry about a child has  
removed. But somehow I seem to be possessed of so many children!

And so another week comes to a close and I am holding the  
thought that June in Lyme may hold many a perfect day, -  
as the New England poet phrased it, --"then if ever come  
perfect days".--I seem to have quite a few appointments but  
there will be moments when in the solitude of the Chapel  
I shall be able to say a prayer of thanksgiving for  
the happiness of others and for my own simply because  
of Lyme.....

6887

7395

Sunday, June 5th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Our full summer weather continues and, marvelous to  
relate, few pilgrims cluttered up my Sabbath. Of course  
I cannot claim in truth that I escaped unscathed but only  
Wisconsin, Texas and Louisiana were represented and that  
appears to be in the nature of a triumph for a hermit seeking  
solitude.

Two news items, having to do with the same character,  
came my way this week end. On Saturday a passing pilgrim  
told me that the shop of the Court Yard Candle had folded up.  
That did not come as a surprise. And then, at dinner today,  
Celeste told me that Toosie had told her yesterday that  
Bootsie Gay had married, --husband No. 5. This was not  
a surprise.

Nobody seemed able to reveal the identity of the  
lucky groom but I am holding the thought that he may have been  
a man of experience. One thing is certain, if he was not, he  
is bound to be by now.

One of my local agents reported this morning that my  
friend, Peter, had been "stobbed" at 2:15 this morning  
at the local honkey-tonk. My informant said they  
had put him in a car and taken him to the Charity Hospital  
in Alexandria for he was bleeding profusely and "us-es  
couldn't see that he was breathin's no more outside....but  
maybe he was a-breathin' a little inside....but uses  
couldn't discern."

I am forever being floored by such combinations when  
one of my untutored friends and all in the same breath employs  
the word, "us-es" and then tosses in something like "discern".

I was pleasantly surprised at 2:15 this afternoon when  
I responded to a tap at my door to find, --of all people standing  
there, --Peter. He said he was heading up the road to the



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baseball game and thought he would say Howdy in passing. I  
I think our friends have the right idea, --if one must get  
"stobbed", it might just as well be done, hospitalized and  
frolicing again, all within twelve hours.

I devoted the better part of my day to designing the  
general ideas for the four corners of the African House wherein  
the paintings by the local artist will eventually appear.  
At each of the 4 corners of the room where the walls join,  
there will be approximately 5 to 8 feet running along the  
respective walls from the corner to the windows, representing, of  
course, from 10 to 15 feet by 4 feet, that will have to be  
painted as from each of the four corners. Armed with a soft  
pencil, I sketched in a general layout on wrapping paper with  
which I had covered the ply wood. I think this is imperative  
for the African House since the African artist has in mind  
doing the sections at home, --and one at a time. Something  
tells me she had better have some rough idea of where she  
is going or she never will come out straight. I am  
doing this only for the murals in the African House. When  
she gets around to doing the Yucca ones, I am simply going  
to turn her loose and I have no doubt the Yucca ones will  
accordingly turn out fearfully and wonderfully African. But  
since it will be the one in the African House that the public  
will see and that the magazine will probably reproduce, it  
seems to me rather better to start them off with some non-  
African basic concept in order that the general public,  
unacquainted with artistic impulses of little Miss Hunter,  
may the more readily comprehend.

On the morrow, I shall gird up my loins at dawning  
and with a couple of strong arm gentlemen, I shall  
undertake the somewhat tedious and equally baffling job  
of moving out the endless book cases, armchairs and heaven  
knows what all from the upper chamber and as to where I  
may eventually find a resting place for it, I know not.  
Then I shall request a local electrician of sorts, --Ezra,  
to put some indelible lighting atop the beams in said  
upper chamber of the aforesaid African House, and after  
much scrubbing, the stairwell and bannister will be freshened  
up with white paint and little Miss Hunter can begin  
her task. I so hope the Sabbath at Lyne was as  
comparatively quiet as mine.....

7397

Monday, June 6th, 1955.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Friday letter in today's post. I  
began it twice, was interrupted twice and am hoping that a late  
traveler toward the honkey-tonk may pass this way before I have finished  
this memo so I may refer to points as yet not reached.

I was sorry to learn that another hurly-burly was unfolding  
for the week end but I'm hoping the weather was fine and that the sight  
of the great out of doors and Nature on the up-swing across the hill-  
sides may have offered compensations.

But that you found time in spite of the swish of things  
popping in the commercial world astonished me in a way, and I am  
holding the thought that writing under such pressure didn't add  
to the fatigue that is bound to be yours before you began your  
week end of further expenditures in energy.

I am genuinely sorry to learn of L. J.'s accident. As I under-  
stand it, such an affliction requires much longer to overcome than  
a break. What a pity circumstances prevent her from getting well  
the sooner by being able to "stay put" for a reasonable time.

My day was a merry-go-round of all sorts of things and I'm  
vaguely sleepy tonight although I shall have to knock off a few  
must letters and then I am hoping to remain awake a little longer  
in order to read invitation to Learning's discussion of Remembrance  
of things Past. For quite unexpectedly and out of a clean sky, as Gracie  
Allen used to have it, two cartons of Talking Books arrived, strikingly  
different in appearance for instead of being in the usual 12 inch square  
or whatever cartons, these seemed to be about 10 inches only.

As between this paragraph and the above, a secretary arrived, and  
I was delighted to re-read and finish your elegant note. I'm so  
glad you approve the idea of the African House murals by an African.  
It was so characteristic of you to offer to join in this projects as  
in all ever undertaken. Perhaps there is one point to which you might  
lend a hand, should you chance upon the name of a wholesaler of



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oil paints. I have been ordering from Sears-Roebuck whose prices may be as low as a wholesale house but as I shall probably have to be investing in large tubes, - say 6 or 8 inches in length of certain colors such as green for grass, blue for sky brown for our friends and smaller tubes of crimson and yellow, --and did I say white for clouds, it seems to me it might be worth while if one could determine a wholesaler and thus be able to order them through the Estate. It seems to me Evee and Reynolds used to have a place on the south side of 42nd Street between Park and Lexington but I'm not sure if they are wholesale or merely retail. Perhaps the Red Book might reveal the name of wholesalers of Art supplies, but this is probably dubious, and I beg you not to give the matter further thought at the expense of your noon hour breather, -- if any.

I moved tons of book cases from the African House into Dr. Miller's cabin today with the help of strong ebony arms, and endless furniture to other sites. Tomorrow the armchairs will be moved and so the preparations go. I shall append a note on the general lay out of the place on an accompanying sheet. The artist came to see me this afternoon. I showed her the sketches I had made yesterday. She was entranced. They will help her with the distribution of the major subjects to be used in the African House. I shall turn her completely loose on those for Yucca if she lives long enough to start in on that place. She insisted on taking two of my sketches home with her and wants the balance. We shall see.

Celeste telephoned me at noon to say Charleston had been telephoning me all morning. She didn't say why she hadn't sent her servant to find me in the garden or African House. Celeste knows nothing about the emerging murals, by the way.

I established contact with Moncks Corner about 1:30. I gathered that Storm was alone. She said she had tried to get me yesterday. I can't imagine why she didn't succeed. She asked if I expected to come over to Charleston and Savannah, and how I felt when I heard the news of the approaching marriage. I told her I was thunderstruck. She said she loves James but wanted to ask me, --and here was probably the reason for the call, -- did I know his people, as he never has spoke n of them. I told her I always was want to visit his people whenever I was in Natchez and that I considered them first raters and I thought his sister particularly charming. She asked her name. I told her Mrs. Patterson. It was impossible to decline making responses and I made them as casual as possible although I wish she hadn't asked and I hope she has sense enough not to tell James she telephoned me. But then, he should have written me a little earlier than he did, --before Irma did, at least, and he should have provided me with any answers. Frankly, I think la Storm merely wanted to be reassured that this whirlwind business had somebody's approval other than her own.....

7399

7399

Tuesday, June 7th, 1955.

**Memorandum:**

As you see and as I see, --a new typewriter ribbon by little Miss Lee.

I have, contrary to custom, the envelope for this memo in advance, just in case the installation should unexpectedly jump the track, and so if everything goes blank all of a sudden, you will understand it is merely mechanical failure on the part of the machine and not on the side of the operator.

Our remarkably fine summer weather persists, hot-hot but a gentle breeze tending down the heat.

News came today of the sudden death of Father Becker, and so far as I know, not a tear was shed by anyone. He took an extra snort of whiskey last evening, it is said, and apparently over-stimulated his somewhat metallic heart. I understand his death occurred in Villeplate or where ever it was he made his residence and operated his oil wells, following his euster from the Clautiville Church. It is so rare that one knows of a person who doesn't seem to have left a soul to shed a tear but Father Becker was an exceptional man to start with and apparently ended as one, too.

Already it would appear that his machine has gone wacky, --

I continue at dawn from the office.....

Should there be a decided irregularity in correspondence for the next few days, simply charge it off to inability to get my machine rigged up properly, for I am feeling fine and shall be looking forward to further communications shortly.



8887

7400

My day was fairly busy and I began it by getting the finishing touches put on the African House interior, removing the balance of impedimenta and getting the walls washed down, the floor scrubbed and so on. It will be so much more pleasant to have the place in order before the various sections of the mural are moved into place, assuming that they all will be effected more or less shortly.

It was pleasant to have such a spick and span place to work in, too, for I spent as much of the balance of the day at sketching out the various compositions as possible. The paintings are going to be the work of the primitive painter alright but a dab of inspiration in advance since it will not be easy to introduce additional changes on wood, once the initial concept has been undertaken.

Today's in-coming post dropped to the vanishing point again and this, under present circumstances, is fortunate, since the Yucca machine is enjoying a temporary rest.

I learned today that my old friend, the piscopal D. J. Coughlin, station in Honolulu during the past three years, is about to return to Louisiana to take over a Church in Lafayette. What with Joel Fletcher, Lionel Jeannard, etc., living in that city, Father Coughlin will be able to exchange notes concerning Natchitoches acquaintances when he arrives at his new post. I must remember to write this news to Mrs. Brandon for she always liked to keep up with friends of friends, as was the gentleman of the cloth with her Atlanta associate.

This morning again bids me fair to bring forth another day of the same delicious quality as yesterday's and I am delighted.

What with my machine out of whack last night, I was able to provide myself with the perfect alibi for collapsing in my armchair for a dab of reading, and I made the most out of the Invitation To Learning, which had just come to hand on Monday. Naturally I read the Proust thing first and found it excellent. Then I did the one on Thomas Paine and one page of Harriet Beecher Stowe. The reader of the American Foundation, --Carl Weber, almost as good but not quite as your friend, A. Scourby, announces the subject matter and names the Bryson guests of each discussion and then remarks that here is Mr. Bryson whereupon the voices, as transcribed from the broadcast, follow through for the succeeding half hour. In short, it is as though hearing the original broadcast with the advantage of being able to summon it back as often as one pleases. I'll be back on this machine again this evening or tomorrow before mail time.....

8047

7401

Wednesday, June 8th, 1955.

Because of existing circumstances and the inclination of hurricanes to sweep through these halls of commerce, --I continue to type from the store, I must of necessity make this note brief.

Our full summer weather continues, hot and dry.

The morning post brought me some more stationary from Moncks Corner, stationary identical to the last I had from that quarter.

A telephone from Carolyn at noon indicated that she would be heading for South Louisiana on the morrow and asked if I would care to come to Shreveport on the morning bus, have a look at Old Bonita and then she would put me out at Melrose as she drove southward.

It goes without saying that I declined.

The pilgrims have been numerous today and I am glad the day is done. I did not have an opportunity to finish the sketches for the African House, but I am ahead of the artist and that is all that matters. I did get a quick glimpse at the first panel on which she is working. Architecturally it is not too hot, the buildings are but vaguely resembling the big house and the African House, but there is charm in the numerous little trees she has painted and she has done a couple of aunt Jemimas who are very nice, Marie Therese by the African House and her husband on the opposite side.

I suppose she will start the Yucca panel about next week. Something tells me she will probably not get into her stride until about the time she reaches the funeral and the baptisin', but whether she attains a striking business or not doesn't matter, just so long as she gets in a suggestion of Cane river life and the mighty canvases can come later of not at all and I shall not mind. From sheer



1045

7402

Thursday, June 9th, 1955.

k9page if nothing else, the present ones will probably be sufficiently impressive. I suppose, in sketching the lay out, I have in the back of my mind the concept of how the things will appear to greatest advantage when reproduced in color in magazines, and she has put both buildings in her first panel on too much of the same line, but perhaps she will get going better in the swing of things a little later on some of her next ones.

Richard Briley, -- I thought it was Riley at first, came to see me today. He is with the Alexandria Town Talk and wanted me to track down some manuscripts of Dr. Dunn if I could, Dr. Milton Dunn. I shall try through Robina who knows his daughter, Maude, who lives in Shreveport.

Mr. Briley was struck by all he had to see on ye olde plantation and wanted some photographic records of personalities, and accordingly took a couple of me, holding a couple of plates in front of the African House. I was holding an African House plate in one hand and if the thing took on the film, it will be odd enough, with the sketch of the place on the place and the building itself in the background.

It is folding up time for commercial matters and what with at the hurly-burly going on around me, I feel as though I must fold up abruptly and I realize more fully than ever how impossible it is for me to be for little Miss Lee while at the office to undertake correspondence. My cough improves and has about run its course I believe and I am grateful for that. I hope you may report good health in the Lyme area, too.....

I suppose she will start the house about now. I suppose she will start the house about now. I suppose she will start the house about now.

I suppose she will start the house about now. I suppose she will start the house about now. I suppose she will start the house about now.

1045

7403

Thursday, June 9th, 1955.

Thursday, June 9th, 1955.

And so if this memo suddenly breaks off for no apparent reason, you will know the reason to be the same as Monday's. It has been a quiet rather, though, and I am a bit of a damp day in these parts and I am promised a dampness for the morrow, -- excellent for vegetation.

The letter from Mrs. Briley just before the letter to the editor of the Alexandria Town Talk, failed to get to the coffee house at the time she had an appointment with the doctor. I am a bit of a damp day in these parts and I am promised a dampness for the morrow, -- excellent for vegetation.

I suppose she will start the house about now. I suppose she will start the house about now. I suppose she will start the house about now.



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7404

Something tells me this ribbon isn't tracking properly but I shall try another paragraph or two regardless.

I was glad to discuss the impending marriage, or rather to speculate on how the engagement has advanced to this stage and so swiftly and we have come to this conclusion, --keeping in mind the personalities of the people involved and what we can recall of the time elements as between their initial meeting near Pensacola and the present.

Knowing Dora as I do, I cannot believe that he knew he was engaged prior to or during Kay's vacation in California, and yet, in view of Irma's letter, it is obvious Kay had just that in mind.

The letter from Dora just before his last one, announcing his impending marriage, did not in any way hint of marriage, if I recall correctly and although he did not tell me in advance of his intention to quit Herman so abruptly, I somehow have a feeling he would have confided to me, had he intended or even given thought to marriage. I could be wrong on this point.

But the fact is that Irma did seem to know about the coming event, and it is perfectly true I wrote her, telling her frankly I thought it must be a figment of Kay's imagination. I still think it was at that stage of the game.

And so, at this writing, one comes to the conclusion, what with the evidence at hand, --meager enough, --that Kay fell in love with Dora, put out the good news in California came back and discovered Dora restless, as his last letter to me clearly indicated, and fearing her bird was about to fly, did the proposing right then and there and, by being successful, was able to confirm the truth of the story she had put out while in Hollywood. I am not at all sure, I think, Kay's letter, written before leaving me Dora, expressing the wish that The Bluff had an intellectual, is perhaps a key to the present romance, for Dora probably represents just the type of intellectual Kay imagines, although sweetness of personality rather than intellect is what she had in mind but didn't

One regrettable bit of news came from Carolyn, when she reported listening to a news cast out of New Orleans the other day. A plane or a bus or car or something, en route to Mexico City, and somewhere near that place, was smashed, killing several people including one Iger Boussel. And so goes the world and so I feld up my beard.....

8045

7405

Friday, June 10th, 1955.

#### Memorandum:

Just to play safe, I continue making my envelope before beginning the memo, --just in case.

We had a half inch of rain during the night, riding in an cold front that dropped the thermometer to the mid 50's last night. It remained cool all day but a pleasant sun tended to warm things into the 80's during the afternoon but it's cooler again tonight.

Carolyn departed for Shreveport after dinner.

We tried to make it up the Bermuda road to get some pictures of Allen Johnson but the road was such a shambles, we had to forego the project.

I. H. sent me a carpenter and an electrician this morning. I had them take out the old wiring on the second floor and replace it with new. There had been but one outlet, hanging down from the central or middle of the place. I thought it would be better to have in- direct lighting and so had two lights placed on each of the three beams which stretch across the room about two feet from the ceiling. In the absence of any reflectors, I

rounded up some nice shiny pie plates, cutting each in one straight line from the outer edge to the center. This of course enabled me to overlap the pieces where the center to outer edge had been cut and as one did so, the former metallic disks formed cup-shaped reflectors which would be sent at the base of the paintsockets on the upper side of the beams. Then a small hole was cut in the bottom of six gourds to fit over the sockets and the tops of the gourds removed and the light bulbs screwed in. Thus all the light was thrown to the white painted ceiling, with no direct light visible and when the big old and woven baskets were placed along between the gourds, the places looked as ante bellum as ever and the light was excellent.



7406

7406

Clemence had finished the first panel, --the African House and Melrose, and I teated it across the cotten patch by myself, although the breeze then blowing almost took me for a ride, as you may image, what with a flat surface, 8 feet in length and four in width might provide by way of a sil.

Clemence didn't seem in too happy a mood. She said she told J. H. she wasn't going to do all that work for nothing and he said, according to her, that since he was providing the boards and the money, she would have to look to me for the money. But she did take the next panel home with her.

I saw J. H. after supper and asked if Clemence had asked him for money. He said she hadn't but that I shouldn't give her any because, as he laughingly explained, "I told her she ought to get her Old Age Pension check increased".

At the moment, I knew not where the status of the thing stands. Surely he can't assume she will paint miles of murals for nothing. Perhaps he does feel that having provided the materials and the workmen to get the place rigged up, he has done his share. I assume, however, that he will provide her with some sort of recompense. I shall go a little deeper into this at some subsequent sitting, for at the moment, the plantation world seems be-occluded, what with the Agricultural Experiment Station having just reported that most of the Melrose pecane crop has been wiped out by some insect which is to pecanes what the boll weevil is to cotton. Another day, a wiser moment to explore the business of the artist.

During the afternoon, I finished the rough sketches of five of the major panels to give proportion to drawings on such a large scale, the concept of which seems quite bewildering to the artist, as the first panel she did suggests. I think she will be catching on to the swing of the thing from here on out and probably she, herself, will get a dab of pleasure and satisfaction, aside from the labor, now that the perspective are assured.

My calendar is heavily dated for pilgrims this week end, one batch being Celeste's friends, attending a fashionable wedding somewhere in this arish on Saturday. I hope there may be a measure of quiet in the envires of Lyfe.....

7407

7407

Memorandum:  
Sunday, June 12th, 1955.

How odd appears the spacing of the address on the envelope I have just made for this memo.

I have been using a non-Denholme margin to write an article on the Melrose murals and obviously forget to adjust the left hand margin when I began this.

And speaking of Miss Denholme, I was a little surprised that she took the liberty to write Miss Dorman about the South Carolina romance. It had seemed best to me that this news be withheld from Briarwood until after the nuptials had been celebrated and I should have said as much when writing Miss Denholme, had I dreamed she would take upon herself to write along one word. Somewhat prematurely. But perhaps by the time Carrie's letter, which I feel this will impell her to write to The Bluff, will arrive only after the wedding party has headed out for Savannah, I hope.

Yesterday and today have been remarkably brilliant and cool. It was down in the '50's again last night, -- the coldest June on record, according to the weather bureau. But this cold wave makes for marvelously comfortable days and, after all these years, and for the first time in my life, I can agree with the New England poet in asking:

"Oh, what is so rare as a day in June....."

since always before they have been inclined to be of the blistering type, making it so easy for anybody to respond with any number of things that were rarer.

Last night I got around to read a few of the "Invitation to Learning" records and liked everything I read. I must begin punching Library of Congress to record a heap more. It was especially pleasant to bump into



7408

E. Roscoe Murrow, discussing with Lyman Bryson and Mr. Reston of the Washington N. Y. Times office, the Essay on Liberty by John Stuart Mill. Except for the election eve comments exchanged with Robert Trout, back in --was it 1952, I think I never heard Mr. Murrow, except on his regular news broadcasts. I must say that he is equally excellent in his role of round table commentator or discussionist.

Ora telephoned me this morning to read me a letter in the Shreveport Times concerning a lady's visit to Melrose 20 or 30 years ago. She will mail it and I shall send it along to you when it arrives. Ora said her father, after a week in a Shreveport hospital, has been sent home to Minden as the doctors say Ora's stepmother can take care of him as well at home, and pointing out that his heart condition is such that it was thought he couldn't survive 3 years ago and that he is now beyond anything they can do for him. Fortunately, his gaiety of spirit bubbles over and he can treat his condition with much objectivity and find humor still in what goes on around him.

Clemence came to see me during this afternoon. She seemed more gay than on Friday and said she wanted to go ahead with the murals whether J. H. lends a hand in tossing cash in her direction or not. I think that is a good sign. She said she has painted in the sun dials and that it looks quite pretty. I shall accept her invitation to go and have a look at it for myself on the morrow. I took her over to the African House, ostensibly to look at the mural section already painted, "just to see how it looks". Actually, my reason was to see if she would take a look at the other sections, roughly blocked out. That was really what she wanted to see, too. I gathered, and I think it so well to get these generally fixed in her mind before she begins setting paint to them, for the over all concept will most certainly tend to lend much to lending harmony to the whole piece.

The cool spell is slowing up growth of vegetation but the little rest, I think, will do it no harm since plants as well as humans ought to have an opportunity to relax occasionally. The tomato plants in front of Yucca have already attained a height of 3 feet which is certain tall enough and the egg plants are about 2 feet tall and the belle peppers a foot and a half and in full flower. I had pilgrims yesterday and today but pleasant ones so that the week end has been pleasant. May as much be said for Lyme.....

0147

7409

Monday, June 13th, 1955.

Memorandum:

I enclose the clipping carrying the letter of Mrs. Molly Banks Gray, mentioned in yesterday's memo. I think you will find it quite gay for a 93 year old lady. I never knew her, as her last visit here was paid many years before my time but naturally I wrote her a letter to congratulate her on her appearance in print.

Clemence came to see me today, with a gleam of inspiration in her eye. She says she knows perfectly well J. H. isn't going to give her a cent for painting the murals but that she doesn't care, just so long as I like them and believe in them. I told her that after we get them painted, she might do a flock of small panels, more or less reproducing certain of the ones that turn out best and that I think we ought to be able to sell a flock of them in view of the publicity that will, I suppose, as a matter of course, attend their unveiling.

It's so typical of the Henry traits to get wonderfully enthusiastic about something and then, especially when the second class citizens are involved, suddenly let it evaporate. I recall a line in the Mme. de Pompadour biography in which the author remarks that her heroine, unlike her successor, never did let the artists down.

And speaking of the Henrys reminds me that the clerk told me today that rma Tucker has been fired from her job because of her constant flying about the world, unmindful of her duties in the work-a-day world. It is reported that although her next to the last car had not been fully paid for, she bought a new forty-two hundred dollar vehicle which isn't paid for either and that her telephone and electric bills haven't been paid in the past four months. Alexandra must be liberal in utilities, since lights and telephone would undoubtedly have been cut off in most places. Apparently there is a tightening of the purse springs from her former source of income, too. That a piece of baggage of her description should have traveled so far as she has is certainly a mystery.



CONF

7410

.2881, 4581 8881, 8881

On my way to the Post Office this morning, I dropped by Clemence's house to take a gander at the sun dial of which she had spoken yesterday. I was delighted with it and although it was vaguely cockeyed, it seems to strike just the right note in the position it is located. She was just starting to paint in old Uncle Israel and his buggy, heading out, I suppose, for Primer Rock Church. I think it is so gay to run together the personalities of two centuries as is being done in some of these panels, for although Uncle Israel was a slave, Pat's air plane appears in the upper blue in the same panel.

I searched for Invitation to Learning, or rather for Meet the Press last night but never could find it. I assume it must have gone off the air for the summer. I did find Elmer Davis, however, whom I always enjoy hearing, his irony is so wonderfully devastating when he gets to talking about politics.

Our beautiful June weather continues although the coolness gives way to temperatures in the 90's. And the builders of the black top road keep the dust flying, too. Today, for example, they dumped hundred, perhaps the and of truck loads of dirt from here to there and back again, each truckful touching the next and big levelers to smooth it down so the passing cars can speed past and shake the stuff into the air to settle every place but in the road. Another layer of dirt is scheduled for the morrow, then an equal amount of gravel and so on, and by September, I hope, they will get around to putting the black top in its proper layer.

I continue reading Invitation to Learning with pleasure. Columbia must have been adamant about giving CBS full credit for each record has an endless rigamarele about ownership, etc., which in all other recordings are reserved for the initial record in any series. But I don't mind the constant repetition with each new disk for what each holds is well worth the endless over and over again recital. And now to the mail and Invitation and so plays out the day.....

SIN

Mollie Bauls Gray  
clipping

7411

Tuesday, June 14th, 1955.

Memorandum: A psychological analysis of vice in French society 50 years ago..... How little Marcel would have chuckled over this summation of his Cities of the Plain, as quoted from the recorded Talking Book Topics, received today.

Our delightful summer continues but the thermometer keeps edging up a little further into the 90's and from where I sit, while Spring will not officially make her bow until a week hence, she has, what might be termed, practically arrived.

The morning's mail brought a few letters, Madam Brandon, Nina McInnis, James P. Register and so on but pilgrims to the tune of 20 in a "drowsy" knocked out the contact with secretaries and so I shall find out what is cooking about the world on the morrow. I smiled to myself at supper tonight when it became evident that the Hunter stock was maintaining and unsettled condition in the local market. A letter had come to hand from Friend Jeanmar, enclosing a check of fifteen dollars against merchandise purchased recently. I converted it in to money, as against the fifteen dollars for the beaver beard, originally purchased for the Yucca murals, but held aside when J. H. thought he was buying them for the African House and wanted better quality. And so, instead of returning them for credit it seemed better to me to keep them for the Yucca project when the African House had been completed and J. H. said that was alright and that I might simply pay him. Hence the fifteen dollars which I handed him at supper and which he took, ---and then handed back, saying that perhaps there would be some other costs not figured on in the murals. I agreed there well might be but handed him back the money, saying he might want to apply it against the moldings that would frame the murals when they were finished. He handed it back, saying he would take care of that. And at the conclusion of this see-saw, I came out still holding the money when he said he had already charged it.



7412

Thursday, June 14th, 1955.

off on the plantation books against the plantation. It goes without saying that I shall be entranced to be able to draw on this to feed pennies into La Hunter's pocket from time to time and thus keep her in an appropriate frame of mind to keep on with her work. I am under the impression that J. H. suspected I would somehow contrive to see that she get paid regardless and this was undoubtedly a gesture on his direction in spite of his opinion of the other evening that I would do well to give her not a cent. It must be awfully difficult for a shrewd business man to wilfully avoid putting over a slick deal when the opportunity for coming out the winner is so easily within his grasp, as in a case such as this.

I chatted for a few minutes tonight with John Kyser. He was thrilled at the news of the impending panels and asked if he and his wife might be invited to view them when they were completed. I told him that I guess was that he would, indeed, be bidden.

At I wrote a couple more articles, 6 or 8 pages in length, by way of publicity for the unveiling of the murals. It seems a dab premature to be doing this, perhaps, since I might avoid counting my chickens before they were hatched if I waited until the final panel had been achieved. But I figure that it will do no harm to have these ready in advance and it is easier to do a couple every two or three days, with the 48 hour interval between giving one ample opportunity to rig up a couple of new approaches so that all the articles may be submitted to papers like the Shreveport, New Orleans, Dallas, Houston, etc., papers at the same time, together with the pictures, when made of them, either in black and white or in color, and thus one may avoid duplication of phraseology and if submitted under different names, they all may be printed about the same time without seeming to stem from the same pen. I really think Margaret McDonald would be flying down to Melrose again forthwith, if she knew what might be cooking. I figure, however, that I might just as well try my hand at these papers myself in this particular instance, joining with Carolyn in submitting some of the stories to Look, along with color films. Since God's beard on the front gallery grew a little over a foot in length today. If the fruit turns out half as imposing as the vine, it should really be impressive... ..

7413

Wednesday, June 15th, 1955.

as usual, came to nothing and the traps have been removed. --  
 the slightest, I think, to extract clean-ness water by digging  
 the instance, another attempt. --

Memorandum:  
Dora's wedding day, and I'm holding the thought of the everything slid along as smooth as silk at old Trinity in Savannah.  
If the weather in that quarter was as perfect as locally, it could scarcely have been better, --summer-ish but sufficiently cloudy to temper the sun's rays and a pleasant breeze to cut the humidity.  
A flock of circumstances prevented me from doing more than sketchily glance through the mail. I found a check from Dora for 20 dollars, as against the mural fund to see that Clemence gets paid and this added to J. H.'s fifteen and twenty five coming in a brief note from Carolyn, --hand written and therefore but partially as yet undeciphered, all of which seems to suggest that the artist will not be cheated as the work progresses.  
In Dora's letter, among other things, appears to be an elaborate account concerning the proper stuff to apply to the mural boards before the paint goes on them. I shall have an opportunity on the morrow to transcribe this on to a slip of paper and send it to town for supplying same.  
Also, in Dora's letter, was a request for more mail, as in my last letter, I had sent him only a clipping. But, running true to form, he apparently didn't remember to give me an address. As I understood the three letters coming from South Carolina a week back, the wedding party was to leave Moncks Corner a couple of days prior to today, and that LaStern would return to the plantation while the newly weds went on a sort of preliminary honeymoon in Florida. Now I have tried catching up with the groom in Florida before, even when I had at least one address, even though it was no good, and I find the address, James P. Register and wife, Florida, a little vague so far as expecting the postal officials to have any luck in getting it to its destination.  
On the home front, all continues to rock along according



8117

7414

to the time honored custom. For instance, another attempt, -- the millenth, I think, to extract iron-less water by digging a well in the elipse in front of the African House. That as usual, came to nothing and the traps have been removed, -- not as usual but to my great satisfaction.

Another familiar pattern came into focus when I dropped by next door for a dab of coffee at 9 this morning. The servant said that the ladies were spending the day in Shreveport. I heard the other day they simply had nothing to wear to Kentucky and since they are going for a reunion with Madam Regard's sisters, who are nuns, even knows the local ladies shouldn't think of putting in an appearance without something to drape about their persons.

The day's batch of pilgrims was not excessive, -- the farthest afield coming from Elmira, New York. But I had several local pilgrims from along Cane River. I was happiest to see Zelma who looked fine, I thought, and in full control of her unfiling gay laughter. She returns to the hospital on Sunday for the tumor operation. I assume the cancer treatment of the past 6 weeks must have proven favorable or even, I hope, successful.

Four different elders from along the river, people of color who have always devoted themselves to making a vegetable garden, passed this way during the day. Word had gone forth, I knew not by what grapevine, that there were tomato plants three or four feet high growing in the shadow of the banana plants in front of Yucca. As vegetable fanciers of experience, they had asked at the store if they might come to see me, -- meaning the tomato plants. And having seen, they wagged their heads and pondered, examined the soil in their hands and toss it back gently. I suppose the entire trick of the thing is the fact that the earth is very rich in the particular spots where I planted them. They are already in flower and tomorrow I am making some larger bamboo trellises for the individual 15 plants since my first construction work, supposed at the time to be adequate, has somehow been lost in the luxuriance of the growth.

I started an article about the murals with Look Magazine in mind at 4:20 this morning. It jogged along alright until my day started. Instead of reading tonight, I think I shall finish it. It certainly seems premature to be doing this but it will be good to have it written when the murals have been finished and the photographs taken. I have never read Look, but I've just guess at what I think the type of thing I think they would like.....

8117

7415

Thursday, June 16<sup>th</sup>, 1955.

Memorandum: At long last, I got around to read Dora's letter which I enclose. I think you will agree with me that it is rather remarkable, not so much for people and things mentioned but those passed over in silence. Somehow it seems so obvious that Aunt Willie turns out to be the dominant character and Kay the most ephemeral.

The letter reveals something else that pleases me much, for I am always delighted to learn that Aunt Willie is resourceful enough to put over something on the youngsters. For this she evidently has done in the matter of the Moncks Corner-Melrose conversation of a week back. It appears clear, from Dora's letter, that he is under the impression that I had put through a call to The Bluff whereas in point of fact, it was La Storm who called me. I suppose either Dora or Kay chanced to be present when La Storm's call finally got through on Sunday and that she cancelled it since she would not have been able to ask the questions she wanted to really bring up and which she got around to do on the following day, obviously when she was alone.

On the home front, I saw the ladies who had been shopping in Shreveport yesterday. Madam Regard was wearing a pair of new white shoes, -- quite fancy they were, too, with much open work and so cut as to enable one to see the big toe. Surely her nun sisters should be jealous of such frivolity which the customs of their religious order will never permit them to indulge in.

Like everything else in life, it seems to be the anticipation of the jaunt to Kentucky which is the most important thing, what with various and sundry preparations being made for the journey which will begin on Thursday, June 23rd when they leave here for New Orleans to take the train for Louisville which, I suppose, they may reach about Saturday, following a day or so spent in the Crescent City. Sunday will off religious services, I suppose, and Monday the local ladies will head out for home. It does seem like a heap of preparation for such a brief time for pleasure, but no doubt the preparations it is actually the thing.



7416

7416

Thursday, June 17th, 1955.

Celeste had a letter from Juanita (Conroe) Henry, saying that Joe will be in Memphis for a week, beginning the 20th, attending some R. E. A. pow-wow and that he will come to Melrose on the 25th to remain for two days, --probably Sunday and Monday, a week hence, after which he will go on to Conroe where he will pick up his wife and whisk her off to the Dakotas.

A telephone from Carolyn indicates she will pass this way for a brief stop and I shall have an opportunity to run through the three mural articles with her for corrections that I know are going to be required, --especially unfinished sentences, broken off by interruptions in the writing.

And speaking of murals, Clemence came to see me this morning, saying she expected to finish the second of the panels by three o'clock this afternoon and could send I send somebody with the section designed for the baptism' and to pick up the one on the Yucca section which she had nearly finished.

Clemence's concept of time has always been relative and accordingly I wasn't too surprised when she and her helper appeared by St. Giggins' Fountain, bearing the Yucca panel, --did I say, at 1:15.

I liked her handling of it alright but was a little puzzled how she had painted Yucca which appears to have an extra roof projecting out from the gallery about three feet below the eaves. I shall have to take her by the hand one of these days and sell her the idea of eliminating this unneeded feature which never in this world could ever have existed and which certainly gives a, --shall I say, -- quaint appearance to the structure.

I gave her some money from Doris's contribution and sent her along home, her helper toting a fancy bushel basket for her, an item which she, --Clemence not her gentleman helper, had been eyeing for some time in anticipation of using it to carry food to some church picnic being stirred up for this week end.

The letter from Nina speaks for itself. I am so glad she is going to spend some time with the artist group for I think she is happier with such souls than the run of the mill society crowd she often permits herself to waste time with.....

7417

7417

Friday, June 17th, 1955.

Memorandum: I saw some of Alton Johnson's prize winning automobile models today. I was enormously impressed by their plastic like appearance although it is only the glossy laquer finishes that produce the magic impression. They were at the St. Louis Convention, which runs up the road where Alton serves as janitor during the summer or rather during the present vacation which is terminated in early July when the summer session is sandwiched in between the May or June vacation and the September-October periods, designed to give the children chance to help hoe the cotton in the Spring and to harvest it in autumn.

Carolyn came by last night and I suggested she drive me to Alton's house this morning with a view of making an appointment for some photographs, for I think an article on Alton might always be in order and it occurred to me that it might be an excellent idea to get a picture or two of him down here, perhaps at carving while Clemence is busy hard by at her painting. Having two exceptional artists living on a single plantation ought to lend news value to any article, I should think.

I didn't know that Alton was working at the school when I drove up to see him and accordingly stopped at his house about a mile up the Bermuda road from here. I didn't know it, but an adventure awaited me, for when going on the gallery to knock, a couple of big old dogs, -- sort of German police, came leaping at me, one grabbing me by one leg, the other by the other. It is a pity nobody saw me because of bushes growing by the gallery for I think a movie of me doing the Highland fling would have been distinctly on the hilarious side. I suppose I must have performed with agility and speed since I soon got both animals disengaged from my legs, -- each having about half way between the knees and the hips. Although without a stick, I drove them from the gallery and did some knocking at the door but as it was evident no one was



7418

at home and as my shoes were beginning to get gummy with blood tr  
down my legs, I returned to the car, came home and jumped into th  
tub and after patting myself to look like a son of  
old Africa about my loins, put on some fresh clothing and  
drove back to the Bermuda road and on up to see Alten.  
He told me his dogs had been vaccinated recently and so there  
is no chance of rabbis, --aer is it with one "b", --a matter  
that has to be taken into account in these parts where so many fo  
are forever biting dogs and the dogs biting people. The other  
day on the radio there was something about 17 mad foxes having  
done damage to dogs in the Shreveport area this Spring.

I got around to read a couple of Invitation to  
Learning programs last night, -- ein Lieber Bryson doing a  
round concerning Jane Adams and having Frances Perkins as  
one of his guests. I enjoyed it. I got to The Pickwick  
Papers, too, --the Reverend Clifton Fadiman sitting along  
side Herr Bryson. I have tried reading Pickwick but find the  
author too generous with his words and I pondered on the  
amount of time it required people to read Dickens along about 183  
when there were no radio entertainments, and while I was con-  
vinced I should never find time to read him again, I  
laughed at myself in realizing that if Time were the  
only element, I most certainly wouldn't be logical if I could  
find little or none for Dickens but plenty for little Marcel.  
And speaking of these recorded programs, I must say I enjoye  
the one given over to Cities of the Plain wherein one of the Brys  
guests underlined a fact about Proust which Dr. Bryson  
seemed to disagree with at the beginning and somehow seemingly  
to resent as the thing proceeded. I had  
Bryson seemed to be going on the old misconception the Proust  
was painting the decline of civilization in France whereas his gu  
pointed up the fact, --the correct one, in my opinion, that Proust  
was simply setting forth that civilization is like this and  
the wheel of the upper and lower ranks of society constantly  
turning, --today's down up on the morrow and today's  
up going around the unending circle.  
Ed. Murrow mentioned the death of John Golden  
tonight. We had had mutual friends and all of them  
admired him tremendously. I had  
Our weather continues perfect although we do need a rain.  
I am holding the thought there may be vast calm in and about  
Lyme.....

OSAS

7419

Sunday, June 19th, 1955.

But the recompense comes in the realization that the work  
has been achieved and that everything will be spick and span again  
for another season, and I suppose there is bound to be satisfaction  
in the realization that all the excitement doesn't have to be gone  
through again for a while at least. And by now, I am holding the  
thought, everything is back in order again and let us hope there will  
much added restfulness on returning to the family hearth in merely  
realizing that all is in order once more.  
Our beautiful weather continues, fairly warm during the  
day, sort of 70ish at night, --and no sign of rain in the offing.  
I had quite a few callers on Saturday, including Philip Johnson,  
Alten's papa, who, having heard of my adventure with his dogs, came to  
express his regrets and sympathy and to tell me that I must come back  
right away and that by calling to the dogs by the names of Trizie  
and Pal, everything will be alright and they will be entranced to  
come bounding to meet me at the sound of their names. Pal and



CHP

7420

Trizie, --what names for man eaters. But I must report that my wounds are healing nicely and that I shall be able to leave off band within a day or two.

The clerk, on Saturday morning, was vaguely surprised on opening the store, to notice a quart bottle of muscatelle wine, one swallow been taken from it, sitting on the counter. He was even more surprised to find the cash register open and the few dollars in change he had left in it the night before gone. A look around revealed that somebody had broken in the door at the back of the store. It didn't take long to track down the culprits, two nephews of our non-regretted cook, Mattie, of yesteryear. Dealey Moran and Love Williams, the latter a son of the Love Williams who was killed in an automobile accident, -- a broken back, two or three years back. I must say that all of this flock of Williamses seem to be scoundrels and one doesn't have to look far for perpetrating when anything is stolen on the plantation. Unless J. H. has turned them out, they are both sitting in the jail tonight which certainly must have pained them, what with today, the 19th of June, being the one big holiday of the year for plantation folks at this bend of the river.

I got a little reading done from the Bryson opus last night, -- a discussion of de Tocqueville's book about America, written in 1835, -- Dr. Tynbee being one of the panel. I also read a discussion of Carl Sandburg's book about Lincoln, The Prairie Years, Eric Severai, is sitting in, learning among other things that like Sandburg, Severai is also of Scandinavian descent. One thing I enjoyed particularly was a discussion on another record in the same series of Shaw's "Man and Super-man" wherein was quoted some marvelous lines in appraising Shaw by the pen of one Sir Winston Churchill who set forth G.B.S. in very telling and brilliant fashion, to the point that Mr. Shaw had never been very helpful to Britain during his long career. And at that point, somebody remarked, --and I hadn't thought of it before, that it wasn't until he was about 67 that G. B. S. emerged as a successful play writer.

Across the fence, the ladies are dreadfully busy, making preparations to go to Kentucky on Tuesday. "You simply have no idea, etc., etc., etc." And in all fairness to the squirrel, I must admit his wheel is spinning at a greater rate these days and obviously to just as little point as usual. Clemence seems to be pretty busy, too, but without a Cadillac, seems to be getting just as far as not farther. Joe Henry is expected next week end and then everybody, except the Kentuckians, will certainly be busier than ever.....

SSM

7421

Monday, June 20th, 1955.

Memorandum: And so the announcement, enclosed herewith, of the O'Brien-Register wedding came to hand in today's post. I must say that the news conveyed by this formal announcement was not of a nature to include any extraordinary surprise, as far as I was concerned. And somehow the accompanying formalism, indicating "At home at The Bluff after August 15th" did not sound too convincing either, in view of all Dora has written during the past two or three months.

I began my day by setting my hand to pushing two items each into the place the other had occupied in the African House, and while this sounds exceedingly simple, and perhaps a little wacky, it really involved quite a dab of labor. You may recall that just inside the African House on the ground floor, there were a big old armoire, chuck full of books near the left (west) door, and a big old bale of yellow cotton next to it, and bringing the cotton next to the right entrance or east door. I wanted them to exchange positions but that pre-supposed that all the books had to be removed from the armoire before I could, with assistance, budge it, and the cotton bale had to be moved out of the way before the armoire could displace it. Well, I did it, and the sole purpose for the doing was this: -- as one comes down the stairs from the upper floor, one will be confronted by the wall at the foot of the stairs, --eventually, -- by a reproduction of one of the sections, in smaller scale, of one of the mural panels, and as one turns a little from the step to arrive at the east doorway, he will find a plate of the African House staring him slap in the face, on a level with his eye, attached as it now is, to the dark cherry of the end of the armoire on which it hangs. My thought is that quite a few pilgrims in the months ahead, following the public panels, will, on quitting the upper floor, find delight, I hope, in encountering these two items just at the foot of the stairs on their way out. Well, we shall see. One thing is certain, the visitor can get up stairs without ever seeing the painting or the plate but they can't possibly get out, on coming down, without having each smack them slap in the face. I trust this constitutes good salesmanship, or at least good advertising of merchandise.



1357

7422

2551, 4508 and 5, 4508 and 5

I read a little from I vitation to Learning last night and enjoyed the go-round about H. L. Menken's book on the American language. I learned from the discussion that the famous initials in American parlance, --O. K., -- was tracked down by Menken to have had its origin in the day's of Andrew Jackson's successor in the White House, and chief patronage power in the Democratic Party. If anyone in search of a political plumb were initialed as satisfactory, it was often designated as the applicant came from or was satisfactory to the political group from Martin van Buren's home town up the Hudson, --Old Kinderhook, and Old Kinderhook or the abbreviation proclaimed to the man shaking the plumbs off the tree that the office seeker had the approval of the party, --hence and "O. K." and, I gather, not "O. Kay" as is often indicated.

From the continued exploration of the Invitation programs, I am struck by the frequency with which Mr. Bryson opens the session with the words, "I suppose". His personality and portrait slowly emerges. He mentions early years in Nebraska. He obviously inclines toward conservatism, perhaps the Republican Party. He apparently hasn't grasped Winston Churchill's inclination in favor of Imperialism. He apparently admires Proust without, as I gather from his remarks and his seeming resentment at opinions voiced by others on his program, having the genuine Proust made clear to him.

One slip of his tongue in his discussion of George Bernard Shaw Man and Super-man went unnoticed, apparently by his associates and by the Editorial artists, if, indeed, the broadcasts were at all editorialized for the recordings for Talking Books. The three men discussing the last act of Man and Super-man, -- the last act usually presented separately as "Don Juan in Hell", Mr. Bryson mentions the popularity of the readings given across the country by the foursome, Miss Agnes Morehead, Charles Laughton, Ch Boyer and Cedric Hardwick. Mr. Bryson, in speaking of the staging of this production touring the country, remarked that the four people were excellent and the settings striking, -- "Miss Morehead in a pink evening gown and the other three men in evening suits". That ought to give Miss Morehead a white kick if she ever hears it, -- "Miss Morehead and the other three men."

Alton Johnson came to see me. I hope Carolyn may get pictures of him on Thursday, should she pass this way en route to New Orleans, as indicated by a telephone call from Shreveport today. The weather continues cloudless and warm but pleasant with May it be ever so much in Lyme, so spick and span, and settled, I

1357

7423

Tuesday, June 21st, 1955.

Memorandum:

The weather man says summer will arrive at 9:37, tonight and as though to say goodbye to Spring, the clouds dumped a few sprinkl of rain on us along about 5 o'clock, not quite enough to wash the dust from the leaves. I suppose we must be contented with this mere suggestion of moisture until November, if the pattern of the recent drought years is followed through again this summer.

I learned today that the General and wife plan to pass this day on Saturday, -- a week hence, arriving at noon and departing on the following morning for Baton Rouge, following a speech making trip to some place in North Louisiana on the Friday prior to the Saturday advent. The reason given for not wanting to be here on the 4th of July is because of the traffic. I could be wrong but something tells me that entire week end will not be without considerable scurrying up and down the big road and probably as much on the 1st, 2nd and 3rd of July as on the 4th, what with the latter date coming on a Monday, but one never tried to go into such matters since usually the real reason on the part of the wife is to get rid of the rural slumming as quickly as possible.

Clemence came to see me, apparently in a gay mood. She says she likes the baptisin' mural which she is "studyin' about" finishing tonight. She wants to do the funeral next, and as that is the adjoining section, I think it well she concentrates on that, even though in her own estimation, the one having to do with wash day is going to be her best and she is impatient to get to that.

I took her over to the African House for the sole purpose of having her walk down stairs in order that she might the more fully grasp the idea I have in mind to place a baptisin' slap at the foot of the steps so every person coming down them is bound to get an eyeful of whatever occupies the wall at the foot of the steps. She liked the idea and we measured the approximate space her reproductions of the baptisin' or whatever should be to show off at the greatest advantage. I am fully convinced that this is the most advantageous place anything reproducing her murals could be hung and I have no doubt quite a few canvases should fly from this spot when the house is ready. I am sure as to some things she is still not convinced she is not a little bit of a ...



7424

2281, 1955, June 22nd

parade of the pilgrims really gets under way.

I got off a letter to Rock Hall, asking if the notation on the African House plate in the lower right hand corner, could be eliminated and in its place insert something about the murals, --without much additional expense. I suppose it may require an entirely new silk screen to effect this but there's a chance, I suppose that the substitution might be carried out piece meal. I hope it may, since I shall probably have to re-order that item shortly and it would be nice to have that particular added in place of the restoration and maintaince item.

The re-order on the Joyous Coast, Grandpere and Melrose Plantation arrived today, -- two hundred and fifty dollars worth. I have made arrangements with Madame Alphense (Lucille) Prudhomme to carry the Joyous Coast item and she may be able to dispose of quite a few in view of the number of pilgrims she has. Besides, there are millions of Prudhommes and if someone in Bermuda has the Joyous Coast plate, possibly some of them will feel impelled to lay hold of these items for gifts which ought to be noteworthy in point of sales.

It was a pleasant coincidence that just as the shipment of the Rock Hall merchandise arrived, Millsbaugh Drug telephoned to ask if I could supply some Grandpere and Melrose Plantation plates and said a check would be forwarded within a week to cover outstanding sales. His will go very nicely toward the expense of the incoming merchandise and so things turn.

So often today I have thought how much you would enjoy the sight and the perfume of the twin grandiflora magnolias standing in a slim glass vase on my desk. They are beautifully formed and each about the size of a dinner plate. The trees are passing their prime so far as the profusion of this year's blossoms go but occasionally very lovely ones unfold at dawn and it was a 5 o'clock this morning that I noticed the twins growing on the tree hard by the big sugar pot. at the end of a branch, two stems put out at 45 degree angles, the stems perhaps six inches long and on the tip of each stem were two perfectly lovely buds about to open. The branch itself was comparatively small in diameter and easily fitted into a glass vase, designed to hold a single rose. There is naturally something a little odd in the appearance of so much flower above such a slender holder, but the effect is nevertheless lovely and therefore perfectly natural that it should impell one's thoughts in the direction of Lyme.....

7425

Wednesday, June 22nd, 1955.

Memorandum: Clouds vary our summer weather without cutting off the sunshine and today a brisk shower lasting a couple of minutes came down momentarily but mightily while the sun never dimmed and made each descending raindrop glisten like frost in the moon light. We steamed the rest of this afternoon.

Along about 3 o'clock, little Miss Hunter arrived with her helper. They were toasting the 8 foot baptisin' section of the murals. The ample sky space gives the piece a certain magnitude and easily holds down about 50 different figures appearing in the ceremony. Simplicity of concept and a delightful childishness of execution injects a certain charm that is characteristic of the artist. She and her helper toated home the adjoining section on which she undoubtedly working tonight.

J. H. returned from the Pecane Growers Association meeting in Monroe. He said that as nearly as could be calculated at the present time on a nation wide basis, the entire pecane crop will be about 10 per cent of average. The March 21st freeze got vast areas completely and some sort of insect got most of the balance that escaped the cold.

While I think of it, may I ask if the Ford Foundation address is given in the Manhattan telephone book. As I recall, it has its offices on 53rd Street but its precise location eludes me. I reckon a letter to such an institution merely bearing the New York City notation would probably carry the letter to its proper destination and I shall try just that if it happens that you don't chance to find a listing in the Directory.

My thought is to ask for further data on the Ford Foundation grants for scripts covering racial matters as might be easily tracked down in this region.



7426

his enclosure from Horth Hollywood is pleasant but somehow I had expected more, especially in view of the fact that in the first of two letters I had written in response to the confidential information regarding the impending Register-O'Brien wedding, I had flatly stated I couldn't believe it. My second, on receipt of Dora's letter, was simply to confess how wrong I obviously could have been. I like Irma O'Brien and I'm glad she and Dora are now brother and sister-in-law. I think they will hit it off well together.

Assuming about 3 days ought to be sufficient for an air mail to reach here from almost any old place in Florida, I am expecting that one of these day a letter will be winging its way along this bend of the river, giving some notion as to where the newly weds are honeymooning. It seems little odd that up until now, only The luff provides a Channel through which out-going mail may be directed. ut by now I should be accustomed to the fact that providing others with addresses fitting neatly into the geographic pattern of where the writer may be at the time a response could be typed is not a strong point in Dora's calculations.

I wrote another six page story on the murals for the newspapers today, and I shall try to knock off another tomorrow. Today's effort unraveled readily enough and if I could hear it re-read, I think it would be entirely satisfactory, as a first draft, at least.

I believe Carolyn plans to pass this way early-early on the morrow with a view to getting some color shots of Clemence at work on the murals, before Carolyn heads southward toward the Crescent City. I am recommending that these color shots be taken right now so they may be attached to the manuscripts and placed in envelopes for mailing at any convenient moment early in August. There are enough black and white films of the African House available which can be drawn on for newspapers and there are one or two in color taken last Spring for such a publication as Look or Saturday Evening Post. With magazine Editors usually doing little or no business in August, it may be better to hold the magazine material until September but magazines do not object to newspaper releases prior to stories on the same subject being prepared for their magazines, and I'm all in favor of having everything "all set" in advance.....

7427

Thursday, June 23rd, 1955.

**Memorandum:** Immediately in front of the white church the scene, this bringing her nearer out to greatest advantage.

Everything got pitched at a pre-dawn level today, it would seem.

For instance, the postman had made his rounds and departed before 8 o'clock, inclining me to hold back my outgoing mail from the Post Office and so yesterday's memo will be posted at the same time this one is.

Another instance of the day's earliness was across the fence when the ladies headed out at 4 o'clock this morning by car for Alexandria, en route by train from there to New Orleans where they probably got a train for Louisville this afternoon.

And Carolyn put in an appearance unexpectedly early and I made the most of the opportunity to get some picture of Alton Johnson as well as Clemence. I chatted with Alton's mother and sister while Carolyn was getting the color shots of the wood carver on the gallery of his home. His mother suggested that it was so lovely in cōlain the front yard, that we move out there where she wanted to ask me about some plants in her garden. As we chatted, one of the big dogs sneaked around behind us and took another grab at me before Alton's mother could crown him with a rake she was holding. But the dog was at a disadvantage, what with so many people about and his companion not present to take a chunk out of me at the same time and the bite he got this morning was therefore of scant discomfort.

Back at Melrose by 9:30, we rounded up Clemence and as Alton, as requested, had followed us back here in his car, we got some good color photographs of him and Clemence with the African House in the background. Then we said Goodbye to Alton who departed and then we whisked Clemence up stairs in the African house where we got some good shots of her in color. She is standing on a little step ladder, pointing to a blank space along the wall where the marvelously wrought cypress slabs form the wall. I am pointing to one seam in the joining of these and she seemingly is explaining to me how she plans the layout for the picture of the funeral which will adjoin the baptisms'. The latter mural forms the background just behind



7428

2881, 6788 enul, yabotunat

her and the ladder had been placed so that her head would appear immediately in front of the white church dominating the scene, thus bringing her portrait out to greatest advantage.

We got several ~~ts~~ shots in all and had all our trips folded up, Clemence gone and Carolyn ready to head South before Dr. Knipmeyer arrived. I considered it a good morning's work since these pictures may be drawn on, not only for the Melrose Murals articles but also for things about Cane River Art, cultivation of rural talents, etc., and while in the past I have always welcomed the taking of pictures by camera enthusiasts visiting Melrose, I think I shall reserve photographing of the murals since everybody will obviously be wanting to take shots of them as soon as the stories hit the newspapers and magazines. Only excellent reproductions will be printed from the Ramsey films and if people really want reproductions of the paintings they can probably get them as reasonably priced from Marshall as they can by their own efforts with dubious results. The taking of interior shots always entails much pushing around of furniture and general confusion which I like to avoid for several reasons. Then, too, there is always the chance that Clarence John will be flying in this direction when he hears about the murals and it will afford me infinite pleasure to refer him to other photographer for his color shots.

As so often happens at Melrose, news items come along the grape vine tendrils from such unexpected quarters, even as it did this noon. The lady doctor telephoned to say she had anticipated dropping in to see me for a moment to ask me for dinner on Wednesday of next week but the patient she had been summoned to attend a few minutes before had been subsequently reported as having recovered from a swoon. The lady, she said, was the mother of the youth from Melrose, scheduled to start for Angola on the morrow for being broken into the store last Friday night. That must be Dooley Moran, the youth, and his mama is Lug Williams Moran. So far as I can remember, this is the first time J. H. ever put his foot down on plantation depredators. Perhaps he thought store breaking a little too much and perhaps he thought that making a vivid example would have a telling effect on pecan stealers, come autumn and the 10 per cent crop is gathered. I gave a tentative Yes on the dinner engagement, being shame-faced about having said No so often. We shall eventually see if my nobility is actually achieved.....

OGEN

7429

Friday, June 24th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Full summer continues without so much as a cloud to suggest a "widely scattered shower". My thermometer reached 96 and the presence of too many pilgrims made it seem higher.

Late this evening I watered the vegetables a dab. I found plenty of tomatoes and belle peppers about the size of golf balls. Another couple of weeks and I shall be instructing Doreatha in the art of frying tomatoes, half ripe, in an egg and bread crumb batter, a dish which I never grow tired of, and stuffed peppers which I like, too.

Tomorrow the postman will probably bring me a bumper crop for he passed me by with only printed material today. Before long it would seem, the newly weds ought to get around to taking pen in hand. Thus far the honeymoon must have been an enormous success, what with both of them too busy to push a pen but I am all in favor of that and trust it goes on forever. There were a couple of pieces of mail a day or so back of no particular interest which I shall enclose and a note from Sister, presented by one of today's many pilgrims.

Clemence asked me to pass by her house with some chrome yellow paint if I had any, which I didn't, but I passed that way regardless and discovered she was pretty well along with her baptisin' picture. She had put in the river and the sky, the church in the upper left corner and a hearse and coffin in the lower right corner. She pointed out the hearse with especial care, for, as I discovered, she had injected a dab of her sly humor in the person of Aunt Attie, "the only lady what anybody round here knowed bout what was always a-drivin' the hearse at the funerals". Somehow I have a feeling you will agree with me that there is a certain novelty of newness in the person of a lady hearse driver.

I think Clemence must have the lady's age a bit out of whack, for when she spoke of her, she mentioned her as being "old-old" and having been here since slavery times. That would make Aunt Attie pretty old, but she could have been born in 1855 and still be going strong, although probably not active in her former pursuits, although that seems vaguely unlikely. I learned that she is living in the little house hard by the fence of the Arenbourg-Lorenz line and I shall inquire from the Welfare Department if they have



7430

an oldest son their role bearing such a name and what her age may be on the official record.

Probably the Aunt Attie was originally Harriet or Hattie but Cane River French converted it readily enough into Attie, and whatever her real name or age may be, I'm liking Aunt Hattie mounted on the box of the hearse, performing her trade with a gusto which her years belie.

Tonight a liquid yellow moon hangs mellow and svelt over the Montrose hills and my impulse is to adjourn to St. Giffin's Fountain after I have knocked off some mail but, fortified as I am, with a bumper of iced Tender Leaf and feeling physically tired but mentally vigorous, I think I shall knock off another newspaper or magazine article as against August or September publication. Up to and including now, it has been a little on the imaginative side to be writing articles describing pictures as yet unpainted but perhaps my guessing has been good thus far or perhaps certain thought waves have penetrated the mind of the artist, since, oddly enough, everything thus far written has eventually emerged on the canvas. For all I know, the real secret of tilling talent, --Tilling Talent sounds like a title, doesn't it, perhaps the tilling has something to do with what variety of flower finally unfolds. But speaking of titles, I am wondering why somebody like Archibald Rutledge never used the words from Grey's Elegy, - "The Dark, Unfathomed Caves", since the flowering of Clemence and Alton somehow bring to mind the sentence from Grey: "Full many a gem of fairest ray serene, the dark, unfathomed caves of ocean bear".

If I decide on a newspaper rather than a magazine article tonight, I shall perhaps suggest news value by some such opening line, containing the time element as:

"This week when the murals in the 'African House' on Melrose plantation are unveiled, a landscape will unfold, so vast that it cannot be glimpsed in a single glance and the hundreds of personalities peopling the panorama can become known intimately only after considerable leisurely study...."

But such an endless sentence will have to be chopped up considerably and following the word, landscape, the phrase, "of plantation life in Louisiana" will have to be inserted. I had better get my phrases in their proper places at the first writing since there's no opportunity to insert anything, once I get the thing going.

But here we are entering upon another week end. I suppose there will be some hubbub at this bend of the river, what with Joe coming. I hope only peace prevails at Lyme.....

7431

**Memorandum:**

How thoughtful of you to get an air mail into the post on Thursday  
and I might have it by Saturday.  
It goes without saying that I am delighted to know that things are  
rocking along smoothly, even though the pace be devastating. Please  
don't try to take pen in hand under such circumstances, being always assured  
that I shall feel any free moment better spent by relaxing than putting an  
strain on things by writing. An occasional post card, indicating that  
the routine is working will keep my spirits gay.

I am so sorry to learn the magnifying glass had to be brought into play again. I shall try to watch this machine more carefully and shall follow your suggestion that whenever anyone passes this way who understands such outfit they may be pressed into an inspection job.

Your account of all the new greenery and yellow sounds entrancing. It makes me so happy to envision the setting and to realize the satisfaction it gives after such a long siege.

And thanks for telling me of your interpretation of the South Carolina correspondence which seems to co-incide so neatly with my own. Some time we may learn something as to what transpired on the night of May 30th- May 31st, for, as you suggest, that must be assumed to have been the night when the decision was made, and for all we know, perhaps the night the proposal was brought forth. I cannot help believing that I was correct when in responding to Irma O'Brien's letter announcing the engagement, I dismissed the matter as a flower that had bloomed in the heart of the lady on Saturday's post brought nothing from the East Coast, leading me to assume the honeymooners must be too busy honeymooning to bother with correspondence and as the Bluff post office seems so infrequently visited, I see no point in writing the J. P. R.'s, only to have the letters remain in the post office for a while, taken to the Bluff, re-addressed, and then eventually re-posted, and so I am not writing at all until I receive some sort of mail instructions.

Joe Henry came in late Friday night. On Saturday morning, I showed him the murals in the making. He was, as might be expected, enchanted, and rushed slap to J. H. to say how wonderful they are. J. H. allowed as how he thought it was pretty good, too. Dan who was present said nothing.



1817

7432

I was sorry to learn today that Little King's wife is pregnant. As Little King has been in Germany for a year and a half or some such, this will probably mean, if his wife has the baby, that her Army allotment check will be cut off, in part, at least, since Little King has long been sighing for a divorce. I think there are three or four little girls and one of them, Emily, although most unfortunate in her coloring, --a sort of light muddy brown, is as smart as a whip and as bright as a button.

Naturally one wonders that as many of these Army marriages rock along as well and as long as they do, what with the youths marrying the maidens one week and departing for a couple of years absence the following week, returning about long enough on their furloughs to stir up a new offspring and then off again. Peace on earth, should it ever come, isn't going to solve the marriage problem but an absence of huge standing armies ought to eradicate some of the domestic dust-ups which, in large measure, keep the divorce mills going at a speed never attained before.

I got a chance to read a couple more Invitations to Learning last night, -- Walt Whitman whose writings I never appreciated although Mr. Belle loved them, and Mark Twain whose "Huckleberry Finn" seems to be the adored book of Mr. Bygones' guests and probably is among America's best sellers over the longest period. I didn't know before that for years the book was banned from Public Libraries as it was considered a mighty poor pattern for youthful readers because of the high adventure, tall tales and what not. Nobody ever banned the book from my reading although I myself rejected it early, perhaps never getting far enough into it to appreciate it. Both guests on the program spoke of the terror they felt in boyhood in reading the book, the adventures were so hair raising, I suppose. That may be the key to my own lack of interest in the book since I never felt the slightest impulse to explore terrifying books.

I re-read the Proust discussion and found it as entertaining as the first going-over. One of the guests says that when he first read it, he was struck most forcibly by finding himself in it. I guess I was, too, but what struck me with even greater force was the great number of people I had known before who suddenly came to life in a much more comprehensive manner and in a more understandable fashion than ever before. In the other symposium, one of the guests said that at 80 he would still be reading "Huckleberry Finn" with as much relish as he did at 8. I can say the same thing for Proust for in each re-reading whole layers of sub-strata, not glimpsed in earlier readings come within view so that every return is as much of an adventure as the initial one, if not more so.

But the hour advances as the new week begins. Next week and will be a long one for you, I suppose. I shall hold the thought it affords so rest and relaxation.....

1817

7433

Monday, June 27th, 1955.

Memorandum: Again the heat climbed to the upper 90's today without any suggestion of rain and as it sank only to 76 during the night, it would seem that summer is really upon us.

From three telephone calls from various people in town this morning before 8, I gather Joe must have spread the good word about the murals, for each man in calling, said he had talked with Joe at the Elks' Club on Sunday evening.

The youngest Went boy turned up during the night but the clerk remained at home this morning, getting over the effects of the shots a week ago when he lost the first joint in his finger from a wire caught in his lawn mower. I had supposed that reaction to drugs of this sort would be felt almost immediately and that whatever they were going to do would have been done within a week at the longest.

In consequence of the clerk's absence, the store was quite hurly-burly, with J. H. directing the plantation as he cancelled stamps, Joe scurrying about to what point, I know not while young Went was making a racket generally. I was glad when the clerk put in an appearance this afternoon so that all the Henrys could get lost on Little River or Red River or where ever it is they are diggin canals or planting forests.

Joe leaves for Conroe on the morrow, I hope, and says he will return on Thursday, bringing his wife with him. He plans to get ten acres surveyed on the point of land across from the St. Augustin Church while here and to build next year. Anything he does is alright, just so long as he doesn't do it. I suppose nobody knows when Joe and Juanita will head out for the Dakotas but I did here him say he is scheduled to be back on July 5th, so I suppose both the J. M.'s and the S. G.'s will have quitted the place by Sunday afternoon, --it seems to be only 1,200 miles from Melrose to Rapid City, and so, for the balance of the summer, we shall probably be honored only by various Wents. How pleasant it is to contemplate the advent of September. If I live, I may be willing to accept la Storn's invitation to catch my breath at the Bluff, come cooler days.



7434

Monday, June 27th, 1955.

Just as I went to turn this page, an unexpected

clatter on the banana leaves indicated one of those "widely scattered showers" had finally arrived. I got the chapel doors closed as soon as possible, the gallery rugs and chairs pulled back and stood inside for a few minutes to watch the majestic rolling of the upper branches of the pecanes, silhouetted sharply every other second by a sudden burst of electronics from on high. And now, 15 minutes later, the moon is out and the air wonderfully cool momentarily while both the big sugar pot and the rain gage register a rainfall of one and a quarter inches.

The usual pattern to prove J. H.'s solving of plantation depredations remains constant came into view today when the youth who broke into the store a week or so back was turned out of jail and brought back home. Off hand I should say that the dominant element in J. H.'s treatment of colored people is that it is constant, treating all of them, youngsters and oldsters alike in a benevolent sort of way to the end that the youngsters often feel just a little flattered, I think, that he talks with them as though they were grown-ups and the oldsters are pleased because they feel the economic despot is taking an interest in them as he would a child's welfare. This approach to the individual and the determination to reward everyone equally in wages, whether the worker be good, bad or indifferent, seems to make mediocrity the common denominator, eradicating the possibility of any inspirational impulse to excel, so that the most shiftless, trashy, no-account bag gets precisely the same consideration and income as somebody like Clemence, which probably make the shiftless ones even more shiftless, if that be possible, while resentment and a measure of discontent stirs in the hearts of those who aspire to a level which they feel their efforts should entitle them in contrast to their no-account neighbors. And so Dooley is home again and the merry-go-round of petty thievery will begin again, probably not with Dooley, but with one or another of his boyfriends who, seeing Dooley slipped out of the Angola stint, will find it worth while to take a chance at some bit of skulduggery on their own hook.

Still no news from the honeyymooners. Isn't it wonderful that Florida is proving so fascinating. ....

to catch my breath at the 11th, some cooler days.

2645

Tuesday, June 28th, 1955.

Memorandum:

If memory serves me correctly, this would be the birthday of Edith Wyatt Moore and it seems rather odd that I should remember it except, and probably because in some way it got fastened in my mind, -- of all strange combinations, it is also, I think, the day the Treaty of Versailles was signed in 1919.

My rain gage showed that one and a quarter inches fell last night along about this time. Today was cloudless and steamy and vegetation must have flourished because of the moisture.

The postman brought me quite a parcel of letters, none of which I have explored as yet although I noted the contents of the envelope from New York bearing the clipping concerning John Golden and I bless you for having provided it and I shall explore its contents on the morrow.

See Henry was out stirring early and bumped into me a dozen times about the messengers, at the Post Office and on. He begged me to provide a suitable canvas for Clemence to paint him a picture on. I told him I would find one for him. He said he wanted a Cane River Saturday Night number, like one she had painted for Dan and for which Dan had given the artist two dollars. Joe said he wanted one like it and wanted to give Clemence five dollars for the doings. He departed for Conroe after dinner, threatening to return on Thursday, to what point, I know not, since he will probably be departing for South Dakota on Friday.

By some odd click on the machine, I notice that it apparently hasn't been tracking. I pray you not to try exploring the shadowy section above as it contains nothing of the slightest interest, save chit-chat about local doings by minor characters.

*t* was really sweltering weather this afternoon when I glimpsed two figures emerging from the bamboo hedge along about 3 o'clock. It was Clemence and her helper and, marvelous



7436

to relate, the helper was really helping, --toating  
a finished section of the murals, --the funeral section.

We got the thing temporarily place up stairs in  
the African House, so that the funeral church backed up to  
the adjoining one in the baptisin' scene and the effect of that  
corner is quite pretty. Clemence really should have under-  
taken the cotton sections next but I could tell she was itching  
to do the pecane section because it contained the wash day  
scene and so I told her to go ahead with it and together  
her helper and I toated the 8 foot board across the cotton patch  
for her. She seemed so gay because Joe Henry had expressed  
appreciation of her efforts and I suppose the portion  
of Dora's check which I apportioned for this week helped the  
spirits out, too.

Madame Alphonse Prudhomme came down with her daught  
along about 7 o'clock tonight and we sat on the Yucca  
Gallery for an hour or so, talking country gossip and

enjoying a neighborly chat. She had the idea that in view  
of the number of pilgrims she receives at Oakland, she might  
be able to sell some Joyous Coast plates and I, of course, am  
delighted to encourage her in that pursuit. She took  
back three dozen with her on consignment and I shouldn't  
be surprised if she should have a measure of success with  
them. With tonight's feeding of the dogs, my role of  
Master of the Hounds probably comes to a temporary halt  
since I saw J. H. this afternoon sending Father Noble to  
Alexandria to pick up Celeste and Madam Regard, scheduled  
to arrive at 9 in that city. I suppose Tuesday night, as  
usual, is gaming night in town and apparantly the  
occupants of Liberty Hall, male and female, get more  
of Liberty than anything else in dwelling thereon.

I miss news of the Segleau family but can well understand  
that that household must be terribly tense at the moment,  
what with a blessed event scheduled for just about  
my day now. Only during Bob's last visit here when  
the movie was made did I learn that Patty was in  
the hospital for 6 or 7 months following the birth of  
their other child and I suppose the prospect of  
a repetition must weigh mightily in their minds as  
the sound of approaching stork wings are heard.

I suppose something may be expected from Florida or the  
Bluff any day now. I hope all three of those pals  
are making it alright and that little Miss Lee is  
already contemplating not too rigorous a week end.....

7437

Wednesday, June 29th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Another nice shower this afternoon, --about three quarters  
of an inch and the ground lapped it up.

I had an appointment with some college professors, their  
wives and some graduate students from Wisconsin at 2 o'clock.  
They came in 2 cars, the first arriving promptly at 2, the  
second a few minutes later. But during that brief period, the  
rain descended and so I ascended into the car at the gate where  
we waited until the sun was out again.

Being more considerate of their foot gear than of decorum,  
the rather ancient professors and their wives, divested themselves  
of their shoes and stockings and a somewhat informal tour  
ensued. Some people tried to "bust" the party, but the intruders  
on seeing the barefoot parade, flew into the dripping bushes and  
departed. I never dreamed that informality would  
have such an effect on potential pilgrims. Per-  
haps I had better start a custom by way of protection against  
week end assaults.

I enclose two letters which speak for themselves in  
large measure, I think. The one from la Storm strikes me  
as being excellent in that it tells us what we want to know about  
the wedding and gives a nice rounded account of everybody's participa-  
tion. It is so good to hear her say she loves James. I think  
he could well say the same thing. I find la Storm's note a  
bit on the optimistic side when she expresses the belief or hope that  
Kay may give James what he gives Kay. That is impossible, I think,  
but with the other things she brings to the wedding, perhaps  
she may be able to make up in other things.

I suppose the reason la Storm did not partake of the chicken  
is because she is concentrating exclusively on vegetables,  
but I know not if she is a vegetarian or if she has to be on  
some sort of a diet.



7438

28-1, 4483 1955, 1956

I don't know if Dor's letter is dated from any place or not but it was cancelled from Ormond Beach. It's an interesting letter, I think you will agree, both for its Chamber of Commerce influence, --all of which I found instructive, and for its failure to mention anything about the joys of being wed or the pleasures of the honeymoon. Come to think of it, he has not written anything about the wedding itself.

Reverting to la Storm's letter, it seems remarkable to me that two people, free white and over 21, should head out for their first night following their marriage without ever having bothered to make any sort of reservations. Babes in the wood couldn't have been more naive, it would seem, although, for all I know, perhaps there was some personal satisfaction on the part of one or the other that they should have to spend half the night searching for she. Thanks to la Storm, we are getting some notion as to some aspects of a poet's honeymoon whilst the poet himself provides a picture of civic amenities in Florida which are entertaining in other respects that his own opinions about wedded bliss. It's so good to know he is fed of la Storm and she of him. Perhaps the third member of the trio will eventually work into an harmonious menage.

I heard from Ora, who telephoned to say that the doctors in Minden had found her father much worse and that she was leaving at noon. I was sorry to learn this both on her account and my own, as I had expected to see her at the lady doctor's for a later afternoon snack.

Carolyn, passing this way, had encountered Charles Cunningham and the lady doctor and she invited them, along with three or four other people. Everyone was very pleasant but I should have enjoyed it much more if just the lady doctor and her husband had been at home for so many months or years go by without have an opportunity to chat that I should have welcomed an opportunity to compare endless notes on countless subjects. The lady doctor looks fine and she and Don plan adopting a baby girl in the autumn. Back home early, Carolyn went on her way and Joe Henry and Juanita drove in to spend tonight and tomorrow. I believe they will be leaving about the time the S. G.'s blow in, and so the merry-go-round spins.....

7439

7439

Thursday, June 30th, 1956.

Memorandum:

Mya I call you at once and in a single breath, --noble, generous and blessed.

Your registered letter arrived today, automatically adding but another twenty million marks to a total of such staggering proportions in relation to everything having to do with Melrose and its murals that you have long since left all other contributors in the field so far behind they can never catch up.

At noon I converted the larger denominations into one dollar bills and put them in a little tin box all of their own. Along about five o'clock, Clemence passed this way, having need of some color which she required for the 8 foot section dealing with the domestic arts, --wash day and particularly the clothes line in the dominating position and the African Pagoda building in the background. I immediately telephoned Irma Somperyac Willard who had called me earlier in the day, asking if she might come down on the morrow, and requested her to pick up the desired tubes for us. I also thought it would brighten the artist's spirits if I told her you had sent along a gift for her and thus your investment went slap into the mural within a few hours of its arrival and tonight, I suppose, Clemence is tipping on the wine which your gift probably afforded her. And so you are, as you have so long been, in the artist's hair, not to mention as being likewise on her clothes line.

It must be frankly admitted that if I have ever contributed nothing to Melrose, it has been done because of your unfailing inspiration and assistance and from the inception of the idea for the murals, you were already part and parcel of them. And yet, thanks to the happy advent of your letter today, there will always be a special association with the sections having to do with the Domestic Arts section, the pecaness, the cotton and the medallion. And I'm not at all hesitant to predict that the section beginning with the Domestic Arts as exemplified by the clothes line, the bubbling wash pot, the African Pagoda, the self portrait of the artist and so on will reach their pinnacle of perfection and I shall forever find them the more inspirational for me because of the presence in them of the generosity of little Miss Lee.



7440

How the news of the panels had reached little Irma Somperyac Willard, I know not but reach her it did and she telephoned for an appointment. I gave her one at 2 on the morrow, and confirmed same by asking her to make the purchase of the paints for Clemence. If she arrives by 7 p.m., she will be early for her. I thought she was going to swoon on the telephone as she related her enthusiasm for the current project.

This morning at 6 o'clock, Will Rogers put in an appearance on my gallery, saying the boss had sent him. He said the boss had stepped his car in the road last Thursday and called to him to say that whenever I sent for him, he should be sure to come -jumpin'. J. H. hadn't mentioned this to me and I hadn't sent for Will but since he was here, I set him to doing half a dozen odd jobs such as repairing a armoire door, painting the bannister around the stair well on the upper floor of the African House and making some benches of rough lumber which turned out to be substantial and just right for the purpose I had in mind. These are five or six feet long and are about the height of one's knee. I am placing them along three sides of the upper floor of the African House so that one may collapse on them and view the murals at just about the proper eye level. They are sufficiently crude to harmonize with the rustic, hand hewn walls of the place but sufficiently sturdy to be trustworthy and of such a height as to be comfortable for a person just about the height of little Miss Lee.

And may I thank you, too, for all the enclosures. I am so glad to have the Ford Foundation address and I am writing two letters of inquiry tonight regarding the wholesale paint matter. And thanks, too, for letting me know about the John Golden estate and its gift to the public. With modern locomotion being what it is, Bayside must be within easy distance for many people in the metropolitan area and let us hold the thought it will be administered in as fine a manner as have been so many of our parks, especially during the past couple of decades.

The postman must be getting a running start for his 4th of July holiday for he had made his rounds and departed long since his appointed hour this morning. I accordingly withheld all out going mail for the morrow but shall see to it that I get to the office by sunrise and thus, I hope, get ahead of him.

I knew you would be interested in the letter from Bob and it is always fun reading Sarah Erwin Jones who used to know Dora in old Lake Providence days.....

7441

Friday, July 1st, 1955.

Memorandum:

The dollar is from Irma Somperyac Willard, and regarding same, see somewhere below.

The day is what one may style hurly-burly. It's hot and humid, too.

The Joe Henrys got off at 8, Joe bubbling over with enthusiasm. Juanita will pass this way sometime in August. Joe will be making a round in January.

Irma Somperyac Willard arrived to keep her 2 o'clock appointment at 4:20. I told her frankly that 70 minutes were all hers. Period.

She had brought a camera with her, --one of those with a flashlight bulb attachment. Naturally she was enchanted with what she had to see in the African House. She asked if she might take some pictures if she promised they would not be used for publication. She might, --and did. But twice she snapped the same picture a second time when the bulb failed to explode on the first go-round. I know nothing about her camera propensities to begin with and what results she achieved, snapping them twice seems definitely on the dubious side. I told her I thought Kodak or some such place in New York did better work than local developers. She thereupon presented me with the enclosed dollar and handed me the film. I am sending along the latter under separate cover, thinking you might welcome it as opportunity, --if anything at all shows up, to get some notion as to what some of the murals might look like.

The corner devoted to baptisin' and the funeral, --if it comes out at all, you will probably recognise from the appearance of the twin churches.

Another one, if it emerges at all, shows me pointing at Yucca.

But what I am hoping really comes out if the one wherein I am pointing to a blank space. If the picture comes out at all, it will reveal the section where the Domestic Arts will appear, and as that is likely to turn out prettily, and what's more important, as it will always be symbolic of your especial participation in the project, I am altogether hopeful that something may emerge from the photo.



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So far as having the film developed and printed, there should be no rush. And should it not be convenient to have the work done in Manhattan, if you will just slap a return sticker on the package and send it back, I shall be able to get it done in town. I did want you to have the first glimpse of the business if possible, however, and so I made the most of this opportunity even though I knew the pictures would probably be pretty terrible and, if good, would at best show but the temporary placement of the two corners thus far accomplished, with the molding and all to be installed only after the complete painting has been finished.

When today's 9 o'clock mail arrived, Celeste was thrown into a tizzy, what with J. H. announcing that a letter from Sister indicated she would arrive with all her offspring for the week end, arriving at noon. As she is having a card party for Madam General on Saturday afternoon and Sunday entertainment for the Baton Rouge contingent, you may well imagine her flight into frenzy.

Actually the tornado arrived from Shreveport while we were at supper. John Wenk has been staying here and there arrived Lloyd and little Cammie, bearing enormous pastery boxes. hey, said they were all heading for New Roads and their mama wouldn't come in. J. H. went out to the store. I suppose Sister must have been in a state since J. H. returned shortly to tell the children who had fallen on supper like a swarm of locusts that they had better hurry as their mama was mighty nervous. Eventually they left but before a measure of calm had been restored, the children returned, saying they had to take back some of the pastery, they having already apportioned cakes around. Then they left and shortly afterward they returned again having to exchange various boxes, etc., and finally ended up by leaving a cake for me and one for J. H. J. H. being a big square number, white as to icing, red ds to 51 candles and bearing in red on the white icing the inscription: "Happy Birthday to Joe".

With Joe en route to Rapid City, and as he spent most of last evening at J. H.'s denouncing Sister, he probably would never see the cake. And so I decided it was J. H.'s anyway, and so I delivered it there after the Wenk contingent had finally departed, --I never having seen Sister who remained in her car. Celeste said she didn't want it to begin with as she already had more than she could use and as I had all the cake I wanted, I simply left it.

I suppose we shall have the whole Wenk contingent, but for a noisier and more prolonged visit along about Sunday or Monday. It's going to be so nice when school gets going again. May Lyme be lucky this hurly-burly week end. I hold the thought firmly...

7443

Sunday, July 3rd, 1955.

Memorandum:

So far, so good, which is about the best anybody can say for a Fourth of July week end when the Fourth has yet to be achieved. I shall keep the envelop for this memo open until tomorrow night and insert Monday's memo, since there will be no ~~gm~~ out-going mail until Tuesday morning.

The Baton Rouge Henrys arrived well before dinner on Saturday and we were all at dinner in the big house.

The General asked if he might make a round at Yucoo after dinner which he did. It goes without saying, of course, that he was delighted with what he had to see in the African section.

I had a few pilgrims but not many both yesterday and today, and all were very pleasant.

On Saturday afternoon about 5, Mrs. James Livingston of Natchitoches telephoned me from town. Her husband heads the Federal Soil Erosion program in this section and they are old friends. She said she had a favor to ask of me. Some lady from Lafayette or some place in South Louisiana who had been here with them two or three years ago was visiting them for a few weeks. She has been consulting a psychiatrist recently and although the Livingstons have tried hard to think up ways of getting her into the country and a change of scene, beneficial, they hoped, for her mental state, they had thus far been unsuccessful. But that afternoon the lady had said she would so much enjoy coming down to Melrose for a quiet little chat and that, of course, delighted her host and hostess.

I never have found out when people eat in town but obviously at different times from country folk but I bid the people come and we had a pleasant session, sitting on the gallery by St. Giggins and chattering away like a couple of pair of magpies, and the patient seemed ever so pepped up when, at first dark, they all headed back to town. If only two or three of the Henrys I know would consult a psychiatrist and get as good results, how wonderful it would be.

Although I usually do not eat breakfast on Sundays, I did



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join the S. G.'s when they sent word to me along about 9:30 that they would like to have me join them at the big house. The big subject of conversation, naturally, revolved about their granddaug who, oddly enough, is the most wonderful child in the world. I am so glad that both the parents and grandparents are so wrapped up in this adopted youngster and while the foundling that lands in a set-up, financially at least, is lucky, how doubly lucky are the parents and grandparents to have such an influence to sweep away the gloom that had settled so heavily on both families since the accident that put little Steve out of commission.

We dined across the fence and everything was lovely, -- and an element of the ridiculous started things off to give it just the right touch. You may recall that the dining room is a very dark place. Well, just as we were seated and the General had asked the blessing, Celeste jumped up unexpectedly and rushed into her bedroom to drag out her camera which has a bulb attachment. In a jiffy, she switched off the dining room lights, leaving us in darkness and adjusted her camera to take a snap-shot. We waited and she finally got the thing properly rigged up and snapped the thing, the shutter working fine and the bulb not dreaming of exploding. There were adjustments made, a new bulb sought and eventually found and a new pose and click, and not flash. The lights remained off as Celeste explained she had to insert a new film. J. H. told her not to bother that since the bulb had not exploded twice before, she could just as well use the same films. He said it with serious facial expressions and some laughed and others, including the camera artist, apparently believed him. Finally Pat took the machine in hand, fiddled with it for a while but Celeste in her impatience, had to assist him and exploded the bulb when the camera was aimed at the floor. Finally, the lights still off, the shot was achieved, the lights turned on and we all attacked a sumptuous meal. Pat, even as Celeste had been doing, was standing slap in front of the big mirror behind where the General and I sat and I have no doubt that the reflection, even though the film were any good, utterly ruined any hopes of a good picture. But nobody noticed that feature and naturally I said nothing during the preparations and nobody noticed the circumstance and by the time the film is printed, the momentary enthusiasm will have dimmed a little, and the lady will be trying her hand at some other photographic attainment.

So ran out an exceedingly placid week end and I brace myself against the morrow when pilgrims and Wenks combined, ought to create quite an impressive display of fireworks.....

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Monday, July 4th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Such a beautiful day and such a quiet one. It only it may have been so at Lyme.....

I was told there were a few pilgrims but I never saw any which is just the same as having none, so far as I am concerned.

Frank Keyes, the Hatchitoches Mayor, telephoned me early this morning to invite me to his camp for picnic and a frolic this afternoon. He has a camp on the west bank of the river, about opposite Magnolia and it is said to be ideal for large parties. It goes without saying, of course, that I declined. He asked about Celeste and J. H. and Pat, but I recommended he contact them by telephone which, as I learned at the 9 o'clock coffee hour, he had done and they had accepted.

J. H. was back for supper, as the clerk had taken half the day off, but Celeste and Pat were still going strong, he said, when he left around 5 o'clock.

I advised the cook at noon that if she wanted to show that she is as smart as she pretends to be, she would certainly give supper early. But she dwaddled and, of course, you know the rest of the story.

Sister and her husband, one son, one daughter and two cousins about the age of the Wenk boys, blew in just as the bell tapped. The Wenks wouldn't eat and so remained on the store gallery talking. Then Sister decided it would be alright if two of her children went in and ate. They did, and returned. Then she thought it would be alright if they ate. I walked over to the house and sat and talked while J. H. and I ate. ut arriving, although she and the doctor didn't want anything, she thought the other Wenk and the two cousins should eat and they did. And then, J. H. having to return to the store as the clerk wasn't there, Sister and the doctor fell to and cleaned up the platters.

I thought it served the cook right for having dwaddled.

But there wasn't as much racket as usual although as soon as J. H. left the table, Dr. Wenk told his daughter he would knock her teeth down her throat if she didn't stop talking so much, --demonstrating



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for the millionth time how fine the father is in his manner of speaking to his offspring when Henrys aren't around.

Sister told J. H. the two boys she had brought up from New Roads were such splendid boys, it would certainly be fine for everyone at Melrose if they would remain here for a week before going on to Shreveport to spend the second week, as she had invited them to do when in New Roads. J. H. didn't seem much impressed, and whether they remained or not, I do not know as I left the supper table before they had finally made up their minds. I did hear fire crackers being exploded beneath the African House roof half an hour later but whether that was merely a parting shot or an initial blast at what is ahead for the next week, I wouldn't know.

Natchitoches Parish, the last I heard, had contributed but a couple of deaths to the week end total for the nation. A couple of colored youths were scuffling somewhere in the Cloutierville neighborhood and one cut the other. A friend was asked to rush the boy to town and he did so, passing along this road instead of the cement highway. Somewhere between Bayou Natchez and Beaufort, there's a right angle turn which the car tried to negotiate at 80 miles an hour and failed to do. The driver of the car and the youth being taken to town for a sewing job were both killed.

Miss Hunter came to see me this afternoon, hoping I might find a dab of wine for her as she and her family wanted to have a go at the bottle with their dinner tonight. La Sempervac Willard had brought me a half gallon of some "excellent wine my French friends in South Louisiana recommend so highly", and as it turned out that the taste of her friends and my own did not co-incide, I was able to be generous in giving it away without the slightest twinge of regret and Miss Hunter was enchanted. She says she will be bringing the clothes line section within a day or so. Obviously she has been having fun doing it for she says "It's alright" which means she likes it.

I sent word to Will Rogers this afternoon to come to lend me a hand on the morrow. I think I shall have him make a frame, running all around the African House upper story to hold the panels for the great slabs forming the walls are not precisely in line and of course one wants the murals themselves to be just as smooth vertically as they are horizontal.

I am bringing my Fourth of July to a close in a fashion that you would enjoy sharing. My out-going mail is finished and I am going out on the gallery where my reading machine and a Tchaikowski and Mozart symposium awaits me. The moon is full and the night so balmy and lovely, it will be pleasant by St. Giggins and the telephathy department will be working over time.....

7447

Tuesday, July 5th, 1935.

Another lovely summer's day, hot and humid and evening when a Gulf breeze sprang up to bring coolness from some far distant thunder shower, I suppose, below the farthest horizon.

Clemence appeared this noon on schedule. With the aid of her "helper" she was teating the 8 foot panel which is the domestic arts, clothes line and all. As was to be expected, in view of all the ingredients involved, most telling of which in my estimation, is the active entrance of little Miss Lee into the project, this segment of the murals, --No. 5 in the ones thus far finished, is by far the finest and I feel certain she will not surpass it.

The composition is simpler, the figures larger and the colors brighter than any of those that have gone before and I am altogether delighted with the whole business. Of course, I must admit, I am prejudiced, naturally, because of the invisible presence of my favorite character in the doings. But even in spite of that, when you actually see them, I think you will agree whole heartedly with me that this is among the finest.

I was so glad to have a pretty nice orange angel food cake as a lanyap for the artist after she had delivered her work and she departed in a gay frame of mind.

Aside from the cake, the artist, on departing, took with her the companion piece to the panel just finished and while it cannot possibly be so good as the one she brought, still, it will perhaps serve to point up the virtues of the one just installed.

A letter in the morning post from Rock Hall says that to change the notation on the Melrose African House plate would require require a re-doing of some of the disks involved in the production of the design but they offered to assume half the cost which I thought very kind. I had assumed, --and I know not why, --that the alteration would require an investment of about twenty five dollars, but when I learned that it could be done for about ten dollars and that Rock Hall would assume half the charge, I concluded the change in the wording would be worth while so that by cutting off the last couple of sentences as it now stands and substituting something about Clemence and the murals, it would be an excellent investment to attract the interest of forth-coming visitors to the panoramic exhibition.



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Also in this morning's post came a letter from James Haggerty, the White House press secretary, in response to a note from me a while back, asking if President Eisenhower would care to contribute one of his paintings to the African House collection of primitive paintings. In a rather chatty response, Mr. Haggerty explained that the President prefers giving his pictures to personal friends only, and this, of course, we can readily understand. As the letter appears on white House stationery, however, it seems to me that it may be classed as an item of interest to be shellaced on the narrow board along side the baptism picture where other notices will be placed as a kind of permanent record for visitor to glance through, should they care to do so.

The Reverend Philson Williamson, Episcopal prelate of Shreveport, passed this way with his wife today. The latter is English and obviously a person of considerable culture. The Reverend had passed this way before and, it was explained when I met them, had told his wife all about Melrose before she made her initial visit. But the Reverend found, as the tour progressed that there must have been a heap of things he had missed on his earlier visits and when he and his wife arrived at the mural section, they were utterly entranced at the doings. The Reverend said he was dreadfully impatient for the next Sabbath to arrive so that he might mount his pulpit and harange his congregation with a sermon, the general subject matter of which they probably will never have heard before in an Episcopal Church. Natural I was delighted that their little visit had given them so much pleasure.

For the second time within the month, my radio died again last night and so I find myself quite ignorant as to what goes on in the world. I did here that Brooklyn won a double header again yesterday and that is all I did hear but since Brooklyn is the only team I ever pay any attention to, I was glad they were still winning. Isn't it odd how one picks out a baseball team as one's pet race horse, knowing nothing whatsoever about its merits but nevertheless tending to hold the thought constantly that it may be the season's winner.

When I went to the store this afternoon at 2, I notice a couple of dozen cars parked about and scads of people on the gallery. I recognized Bill Jones who told me the crowd was made up of planters in the neighborhood who were joining J. H. in making an investigation of the boll weevil situation in various local cotton fields. Later I learned that they found practically none which means that cotton dusting by air plane will accordingly be delayed much later than usual this year and at the same time making it evident that the crop will accordingly cost much less to produce. --And so I close, --the happier for this day which made Lyme so evident on the clothes line....

7449

July  
Wednesday, ~~June~~ 6th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Shades of "La Troisieme Jeunesse de Madame Prune".....

I think I was never more tired but I shall probably perk up readily enough after a hot shower and a go at some ice Tender Leaf.

The marvelous weather continues, the heat and humidity high pleasant enough if one isn't pulling and hauling about as I have been the greater part of the day.

I moved 43 sectional book cases, each loaded with books, from upstairs in the African House to Dr. Miller's, with the assistance of one strong arm, which ended up by making a tired arm out of me.

Originally I had envision using these as book shelves two feet or rather two sections high, running round the upper chamber, but then decided that I would have a wooden shelf made in their stead since the plantation didn't seem to mind buying some lumber. There will be about 85 feet to this shelf which will begin under the pictorial cartouche of the plantation between the two windows at the back of the room and continue over half way around the place.

On this shelf I shall stand appropriate objects, such as one of Alton's wooden mules, if he ever gets around to make one, and I think a statue of the Blessed Martin, not carved, because Alton apparently can't get the idea, but perhaps one from the Guild, to stand slap between the twin churches in the baptisin'-funeral section of the murals, don't you think so.

My thought is to leave the floor of the place in the natural wood, covered by a striped rug, perhaps. The 5 or 6 benches which Will Rogers has made of crude wood will have their tops painted a bright vermillion which ought to be striking, and these will run round the room just beneath the aforesaid shelf which I shall paint a 1812 gray while it in turn will be just below the white of the molding framing the colorful murals. The effect may turn out to be gaudy but I'm hoping to achieve something striking and perhaps a bit suggestive of something out of Africa.



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I had gone to bed last night when Bob Segleau telephoned me to report that he and Patty are proud parents of a little girl and that mother and child are doing splendidly. I am so glad for them, they looked forward to have a child with such keen anticipation.

Just before my radio played out a day or two back, I heard the news report of the heart attack suffered by Senator Linden Johnson, or however that Texas gentleman spells his name.

This recalled to mind some things I had heard Helen Baldwin mention about him a few years back. She said that her husband as Editor of the Waco Times, had been enthusiastic about Johnson and supported him in his candidacy straight through until, as later happened, it struck Frank Baldwin that said Johnson, like Al Smith before him, had deserted the ranks of the majority of the citizens and had gone over 100 per cent to the big money boys. Black Cadillacs soon became the Johnson mode of getting about and one night when with a degree of swank, he stepped from his car on his way into a Waco party, Frank happened to have just arrived, had a drink and made a couple of unpleasant remarks to said Johnson to his face. Johnson, it seems is about six feet four inches while Fran was about a foot shorter and the spectacle of the two gentlemen taking swings at each other, attired in tuxedo apparel, must have been both hilarious and lamentable. Friends eventually intervened before either had done any damage to the other.

Later when Johnson had gone to the Senate and Frank had died, the Senator invited Helen to Washington and entertained her very kindly although he knew that her late husband had never forgiven him for having gone over to big business. The Democrats in Texas felt that Johnson might be the one person who could round up enough votes among conservative Democrats across the nation to capture the convention and nominate said Johnson. The heart attack, however, will undoubtedly eliminate the gentleman forever as a Presidential possibility.

Forgive me for the dullness of this letter. Frau Prune will now plunge into a bath and collapse and will try doing better on the morrow.....

7451

Thursday, July 7th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Today's pattern seems to have been very much after the manner of yesterday's, Heat, African House activities and pilgrims, not to mention a certain tiredness, fortunately induced by nothing other than poor footgear, for all my shoes suddenly went to pieces at the same time and I discovered there was a temporary absence of the 8 and a half size which I wear. But that will be corrected by Monday, I trust, and then I suppose I shall be kicking up my heels and feeling as lively as a kitten.

It wasn't difficult for me to fall asleep last night but about quarter of 10 I awoke at the tingling of my telephone. Celeste was calling from Beaufort where she was partying to say that R. B. had just called to say that Ora's father had died.

As this event has been expected for the past several months and as he lives in Minden and Ora is there, I cannot think why the good news could not have been withheld from me until the coffee hour unless, perchance, the party was getting dull and Celeste merely wanted to do a bit of telephoning.

When I awoke this morning, I assumed that Will Rogers and I would have a fairly busy day of it in leveling the supports to which the murals will be attached but I hadn't counted on J. H. who not only sent me Will Rogers but threw in Joe Chevallier (Chevalier) the local expert mulatto carpenter to boot. The mulatto and the negro in this instance work very well together but the job was a tricky one and they were busy with it about all day. They also put in the 85 foot shelf, or whatever the length is and Will got all the moldings painted white so they may be fitted on four or five paintings on the morrow.

I asked J. H. to order some shellac and bright red paint, too, and he telephoned Pat to bring it down from town if and when he comes home tonight as I shall require the morning when the



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gray for the shelves will arrive from another quarter and some  
yellow and pink paint with which I shall do some blending with  
the red and so bring forth a lovely yellowish pink for  
the benches, I hope.

At supper, J. H. said to me:

"You know Fugabou and Mitchell (the are) are pretty  
good painters, too. You might just as well have them tomorrow  
too."

And so, with a couple of carpenters hammering and a couple  
of painters swinging a brush or two, the African House ought  
to present a fairly busy picture on the morrow and if the  
weather continues warm and doesn't get too humid, perhaps  
the major portion of the refurbishing of the place should be  
accomplished although it is just a detail that four more  
sections of the murals remain to be painted and naturally, they can  
have their molding installed until after they are painted.

Today I discovered to be a fact what I had suspected yesterday,  
the paint Will had mixed for me for introducing a dab of  
pale salmon-brick-ish coloring at certain spots on the  
outside of the African House, --the ground story, -- turned out to  
be a strange lavender-purple and the poor old African House certainly  
looks odd enough. I shall see what another attempt at color mixing  
can accomplish and I hope something a little less imperial and  
a little more brickish may be achieved.

On the 4th of July, Madam Youngblood, wife of the overseer,  
sent me a chocolate cake which I just go around to sample  
this evening. It is wonderful and I think I shall have  
go at another piece before calling it a day. What brought forth  
this gift, brought over by a servant, I do not know, as I have  
never seen the lady but once in my life, perhaps a couple of years  
ago about the time the Youngbloods were planning to come here  
to live. Eventually I shall return the cake plate and cover by a  
servant for I don't want to establish a personal contact, or  
rather a face-to-face encounter since I have always avoided  
invitations to dinner or to spend the evening since I prefer  
spending my evenings at Yuuca

And so to the cake and tender leaf section and thence to  
bed. I'm holding the thought the thermometer may not be sizzling  
to mightily in the vicinity of Lyme and little Miss Lee.....

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P. S.

Humidity is sealing the envelopes before I can  
get them open to insert memos. Don't be surprised if some  
seem slightly mal-treated. f.

Friday, July 8th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Another week finished, another week end begun.

According to my radio, which isn't mine but a borrowed  
one while mine is getting tinkered with, you all are having  
a heat wave. Northern heat waves and especially those in urban  
centers are so much more devastating than those in the South  
where somehow we are braced against them whereas the North is not.  
I do hope you are moseying along as slowly as possible these days.

This morning with the dawn came a couple of carpenters, a couple  
of painters and two gardeners. Like Caesar's wife, I had to be  
all things to all men and so my day was fairly busy.  
The carpenters didn't know precisely how I wanted the molding put on  
the few panels that were ready and the painters didn't know how I wanted  
to colors mixed and which tints I wanted for shelves, benches and  
outer walls of the African House. The gardeners just didn't under-  
stand what was expected of them, and somehow we all got through  
the day with accomplishing quite a lot, not to mention some  
pilgrims thrown in to boot.

I got some of the panels shellaced on both sides and put into  
place, although most of the molding cannot be put on  
until the whole series is complete since one section somehow hinges  
on the next and so on around. But everybody, including myself,  
likes the Wash Day section best and I think you are going to  
like it, too, --wash day and the baptisin', I think but wash day  
particularly for its lovely coloring.

Some people had an appointment with J. H. this morning, --National  
Forestry people, and of course the first thing J. H. had to do was  
to bring them to the African House where we were in no position  
to receive visitors but it is nice to know that he is taking such  
an interest in the business  
The gray shelving brings out the white of the molding just above  
it so very nicely and the pink-red benches point up the 80 odd feet  
.....



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shelf so nicely that when the thing is finally achieved, I think it is going to look nice and African.

I had the door upstairs in the African House converted into a Dutch door, - cutting it in half horizontally and painting the whole thing blue which harmonizes nicely with the other coloring. Making it a Dutch door enables me to keep the lower half closed to keep out the strong light reflected from the greensward below and at the same time enable one to get a maximum of ventilation by leaving the upper part open.

In the midst of one thing and another, Clemence appeared to ask for more paints and to say she thought she would have the pecan companion piece to the clothes line section completed this week end. That will mean six she has finished and three more to go, -- and I hope she lives. May we all live, in fact, and I suspect we shall.

In the garden section, it is obvious that again this year, the butterfly lilies are going to fail to make it by the 9th of July as they sometimes do. I suppose this year's late cold snap on March 27th automatically put their calendar back for them. Some of the cone shaped buds from which a dozen or two blossom will eventually emerge are already formed but the flowers themselves will be another week or so in making up their minds, I believe.

I never did see the ladies next door today. I skipped the coffee hour, understanding that both ladies were in Alexandria but learned at supper that only Celeste was spending the day there on some sort of frolic. There have been so many parties this week that the lady complains of exhaustion but simply can't forego getting back into the squirrel cage whenever the big wheel threatens to turn, sometimes twice a day, sometimes three times a day. And it all seem wonderful and wonderfully futile.

Frances Henry is taking typhus and other shots in preparation to going to Japan for a couple of years to serve as librarian, --I suppose with the armed forces, for although she seems not to be in the Army, she does have to wear a uniform and has to agree to remain a couple of years. She care nothing about the Orientals or anybody but since Japan is far away and as she doesn't care for anyone in Louisiana, --and most important, the pay is high for this rich lady, Japan seems to be an ideal situation. Poor people, indeed, when all they have is money.....

7455

Sunday, July 10th, 1955.

Memorandum:

It is about 9:30 p.m., and I set hand to typewriter for the first time today.

People, friends, strangers and acquaintances somehow manged to dove-tail things from 5 o'clock this morning so that I never did get a minute to myself for a little chat until this moment. Sometime between now and tomorrow morning's mail, I must attempt some of the 5 fifteen or twenty letters I usually knock out on the Sabbath but something tells me most of them will be mere notes.

One of the afternoon visitors was Dr. John Kyser who telephoned me this morning, saying he simply couldn't wait until varnishing day to come to see what progress was being made on the murals. He asked if he might bring his wife and a Dr. and Mrs. Evans. They came around 5 and remained until 8 when I supped across the fence, got bogged down with some late visitors there and so am pausing for this little note before rolling up my sleeves for the mail.

Dr. Kyser got Dr. Evans to join the Northwestern faculty for some course in writing, I suppose, as Dr. Evans comes directly from the Facts Forum program. He says Dan Smeeth who has broadcast the programs from the time of their inception is leaving the organization in August. You perhaps may recall, if you have facts forum in your area, that this is the thing which is backed by the fabulously wealthy oil man, named Hunt. It is said he is withdrawing much of his support of the program shortly. Dr. Evans said that sometimes Hunt apparently pays no attention to the programs and at other times he makes a big racket about the material that is broadcast. I suppose it would be difficult to find a millionaire to sponsor a program of this sort who would keep his hands off the editorial nature of the thing. Facts Forum always states that it is making an effort to present both sides, --as thought there were but two sides, of every question, but I gather that in so doing, those in charge of Facts Forum weren't expected to put "big money" in too unfavorable a light.



7456

The Three Wenk offspring spent Saturday here and Lloyd, the older of the two boys, apparently did much work on our feathered friend with his gun. He stopped by the African House where I was working with Fug, Bour and Will Rogers and I called their attention to the fact that he came upstairs, asked me about something or other, walked back out, never apparently having noticed a thing on the walls, all a-drip with color, and this, in sharp contrast, to a colored boy of about the same age, who had been sent to me with some one who had arrived half an hour ahead of Lloyd and who had been struck dumb with astonishment and delight at what he caught sight of, so much so that he almost forgot to deliver the message. Probably neither the white boy nor the colored boy had ever been in a room so weighted down with murals and the colored boy was entranced and the white boy hasn't seen a mural yet.

We almost got a sprinkle at first dark tonight, but the net result was merely a tremendous humidity. I think I mentioned in my last letter that the envelopes are present problems, the gum is sticking so frequently before the envelopes have even been put into the machine. I mention this so that you will not be alarmed if occasionally some of the envelopes appear to have been torn here and along the edge which is sealed.

On Saturday afternoon about 5, I decided to treat one of the sections on cotton to the artist, as she had told me earlier in the day that she had finished with the pecan department. She must have had the same idea that I had had, for I met her and her helper half way between her house and Yucca, slap in the middle of the cotton field, her helper carrying the pecan section, I toting the cotton one. And so each continued on his way, after which I returned to the African House. She did nicely by the piece she had just finished, and it appears excellent. A big old sow with some little pigs grace the river bank just below the henkey-tonk and the sow appears to be about twice or thrice since of the youths gaming outside the building, and probably in the artist's mind, the relative value of the animal and the gamblers is about perfect as portrayed by her facile brush.

I'm going to take things a little slower this week, I think for nothing more will require immediate attention at the African House until the balance of the panels have been finished and I shall be delighted to get caught up on some of my gardening and desk work. May your week end have been an uneventful one, too.....

7457

Monday, July 11th, 1955.

Memorandum:

And just to think I had so firmly believed there wouldn't be anything but quiet and an opportunity to catch up on half a dozen odds and ends, too long neglected!

But with the dawn, --and somehow it seemed to arrive so early, came more workmen with a message from J. H. saying that if I could use any or all of these people in carrying out African House plans or making repairs on the several building within the garden confines, they were mine. So, naturally, I put them to work, thereby carving out a neat, full day's set of chores for myself.

But before doing anything, I saw to it that Mark and Fug bou got mixing paints while I dished out tasks for the others and finally I got the horrible like sky blue of the African House doors converted into a blue green or a green blue that does alright with the pale rose of the walls and so things got to turning and have been ever since until now, pilgrims included.

At 9 o'clock, I found the ladies across the fence discussing two deaths that had transpired over the week end in the ranks of Alexandria and Hatchiteches people we knew. The Phillips death in the Alexandria family was that of a man about 50 years old who had had a heart attack a few months back. He had gone down to Pointe Coupee Parish to see about some of their property down that way, --they control eight thousand acres in Pointe Coupee, and later his body was found in the Mississippi River. He had parked his car and was walking along the margin of the river when, alone, a second heart attack came, knocking him out and into the river. His funeral was yesterday.

The Hatchiteches death was that of Paul Ducaneau, perhaps 60's, an ancient local family. He lived near Joe and Ette Levy and the former had chatted with said Ducaneau, while they say in the garden during the afternoon. When Joe left, he had gone but a short distance when he heard a revolver shot, and racing back, found his conversationalist dead. The Ducaneau men have always suffered persecution



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complexes and have made outrageous husbands, it is said. Paul's mother died in January and last week Paul learned that he was suffering from cancer of the throat. His funeral was this afternoon and Celeste was in quite a twitter about the whole thing, declaring that suicides are the fault of society in general, etc., etc., and that "we normal people", -- how she loves to use that phrase, -- should help others out as much as we can. She even says anything about working on her own in laws where well she might make a start.

The day's post brought letters from Briarwood and Waco. I got around to read the Waco one, thinking Helen might be threatening to honor me but I never did get round to open little Miss Dorman's communication as it probably is devoted to flora and fauna and contains nothing more vital, I hope.

Helen's letter surprised me in that she doesn't seem averse to heading out for Ankara or however one spells the name of Turkey's capital. What on earth would impell anyone to go there on a pleasure jaunt, I cannot for the life of me imagine. Constantinople or Istanbul or whatever it is presently styled, ought to provide anyone with lots of interesting things to visit but what in the world anyone would do in a 1927 Tobacco Road place like Ankara, I cannot for the life of me imagine, -- not when one thinks of so many delicious spots in the world having so many things to offer. I shall be interested to learn if Helen can find any enthusiasm on Carolyn's part for such a trip. Personally, I can't think of a single reason why anyone should wilfully take off for such a hobble-tee-hoy place, but I must remember that there's no accounting for taste.

At supper, the clerk told me that Alton Johnson received a telegram through the store this afternoon, advising him that he had again won the State and Regional 1st prize awarded by General Motors for models. I suppose the national selection will be named within the next week or two. I'm so glad for Alton for I'm sure this prize will go far in assisting him in his educational pursuits and if he should win first prize, a fat scholarship goes with it. He is scheduled to come to see me on the morrow and I am holding the thought I can get his mind off cars long enough to do a mule and Brahman bull for the African House before he heads out for school.....

0347

7459

Tuesday, July 12th, 1955.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Friday letter in today's post.

It is so good to know how things have been going, your opinions of various matters concerning our mutual friends and to learn that you could make something out of the I.S.W. films. I pray the Lord the handling of the latter may not have put a terrible crimp in your usual routine.. Please do not let yourself be pushed into greater tangles in the mailing of them for there is certainly no rush about returning the negatives to La Willard.

Your observations regarding the correspondence from South Carolina and Florida echoed my sentiments to perfection. La Storm is so remarkable, and I do hope the years ahead will hold endless happiness for her. Apparently there's a mutual admiration existing between her and Dora and perhaps this will tend to bolster any sagging that might develop in the new marriage. Why I should be supposing there could be any rift, I cannot say and yet the absence of reference to the Savannah business somehow seems a dabominous. You will be interested in the letter from Carl Harness in today's post. I am so sorry Lillian has had such an accident. For people who are always flying about, the 40 pound cast on her foot must be particularly cumbersome. You may recall that it was with the sisters Holland whom Dora lived so many years. It must seem odd that that he didn't let them know, at least vaguely, as to whence he might be heading, since he didn't know precisely himself, apparently, when he quitted Norman.

The letter from Miss Dorman speaks for itself. Why she should forego the stacks of business letters in favor of a note to me, I cannot imagine unless it be that she wants some information, as indicated, about the O'Brien-Register romance, or perhaps would like to have the red carpet out for her nieces or possibly would like to get in an early order for gourds. Whatever the reason, I shall be delighted to see her and shall make every effort not to drop dead with surprise if she



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should, indeed, actually show up, which, knowing her as we do, is most problematical.

A letter from Rock Hall suggests some elimination of words from the substitute text sent in for the African House plate and their suggestion seems to be alright. I am hoping for a Labor Day delivery as my present stock of that particular item is low and I suppose there may be a demand for the item, should the proposed publicity concerning the buildings murals gets off to a good start. Did I mention that along the shelf below the murals, I am placing a Melrose plantation plate, --casually, of course, so that it will rest just under the section in which Clemence will paint the pictorial map of the plantation, along the lines of the design in the plate. I am under the impression that the presence of the plate in such close proximity to the larger lay-out may well serve to further sales.

I was in the African House twice today and each time I instinctively gazed at the wash line which somehow is so indelibly stamped with the insignia of Lyme. I am so happy that it is the best item she has done for it and little Miss Lee will forever form a composite of it for me.

I plan to journey across the cotton patch tomorrow sometime or other with a view to lending encouragement to the artist and at the same time passing along about five dollars worth of enthusiasm on the part of little Miss Lee.

Father Real passed by to see me for a moment this morning. He wanted to tell me of a letter he had recently received from a friend of his who is a priest in Brazzeville where he teaches little colored boys about 14 to 16 years of age. The priest wrote that one of these boys, proficient with his brush, had astonished everybody by painting a picture of the Trinity in such a fashion as to make the combination, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, appear as separate personalities and yet at same time had succeeded in making the likeness as of one. How I should love to see a photograph of that creation, stirred up in the depths of the Congo.

At coffee this morning, Celeste told me that she and three of her girl friends are going to Shreveport for a two day frolic on the morrow. She is so tired she simply has to run away for at least two days to ~~her~~ renew her vigor by some form of diversion. Isn't it wonderful. But I must break off at this point, repeating again how happy your message in today's post has made my day.....

7461

Wednesday, July 13th, 1955.

Memorandum:

We had such a nice rain of a little over an inch last night and another this noon of half an inch and its sprinkling tonight. We can take all the water coming this way, --which will probably be very little more between now and November but the present dash of moisture is just perfect for filling out the cotton bolls and fattening the plants on our side of the fence at the same time.

At 4:20 this morning a terrific bolt of lightning discharged over two pecan trees in the pasture half way to Little River, ripping out the tops of two big pecan trees and killing a cow and a calf about half way between the two trees. There was no rain at the time so that the clap of thunder somehow seemed twice as loud as usual.

It's always nice hearing from the Kleisers and as you will note from the enclosure, it is possible they will be making a round one of these days and I shall be delighted to see them.

The enclosed clipping is from the Shreveport Journal of July 12th, 1955 and seems to contain nothing of interest except the errors. The funniest of these, I find, is the statement that the gin had to be taken down and cleaned after the yellow cotton had been ginned. Obviously the writer of this article didn't know a thing about processing cotton. After all, the yellow of the cotton is not a dye and cannot possibly come off and there certainly would be no point in taking a gin apart whether the cotton being put through it chanced to be yellow, green purple, clean or dirty, --its all cotton and it all goes through the stands to the presses and not a trace of whatever goes through is ever left behind. This must be the work of some society gal who would obviously do better to stick to her society reporting. I suppose she must ~~be~~ have been among those present on some tour or other and picked up what correct data she could and elaborated on the unknown.

I talked with Ora this afternoon, --the first time since her father's death. She said she is getting along nicely and is back in school and as busy as a bee. She said she thought I would be



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interested in hearing that she and R. B. had bumped into Dan in Arthur Watson's office a day or two ago and that Dan had asked her if she had seen the African House murals and declared he thought they were the best things Clemence had ever done. That seems to set the seal of satisfaction with them on all the Henrys except Sister who hasn't seen them as yet and who most certainly will never take time out to give them a second glance if she ever learns about them for Art and Sister are two ingredients which simply do not mix although she will be the first, I suppose, to begin claiming the artist as the child of her raising if she ever suspects that a vogue is heading in Clemence's direction.

I gave up my intetion of visiting the artist today when the rains continued to put the highway into a perfect ocean of mud, necessitating wading up to one's ankles through the stuff if one decided he wanted to cross. For yesterday's shower came immediately after tons of soft earth had been dumped on the thoroughfare and the resulting deluge converted it into something impassable and so it has remained, the graders and road rollers being unable to negotiate the sea of mud.

Two mulatto youths appeared at dinner time today, saying that Dr. W. W. Smith of Shreveport, had recommended that they drop in to see me when down this way. I suppose they were about 16. I showed them about and as they were leaving one of them said he did some painting and wondered if the next time he was down this way he might show me some of his work. I suppose there will be a flurry of such things when the murals make their bow.

Surely Dora could have fun if he and Kay invested in Reform Plantation up Bermuda way and converted a section of it into an art center. They probably wouldn't make any money which certainly wouldn't be necessary but they could have lots of fun and Fortune might favor because of the uniqueness of such an enterprise. Besides, there would be satisfaction in finding what, if any, "gem of fairest ray serene, the dark unfathomed caves of ocean bare". or is it "bear".

It's so pleasant to hear the sound of the gentle rain on the (on the) flat surfaces of the banana leaves and the big old elephant ears and now I shall attack my mail to the sound of such a symphony.....

7463

Thurs. 7/14

Estille Day, 1955.

Memorandum:

As I jotted down the date line, I wondered to myself and reasoned it out for the first time, --just why the 4th of July always seems so nice all around and why the 14th doesn't, and I suppose it must be because on this side of the Atlantic in the Revolutionary days they had so many Jeffersons and Washingtons and Adamses and Madisons and Franklins and such like and so little blood letting whereas on the other side of the ocean they had such a raft of Robespierres, Marats, St. Justs, Dantons and the Lord knows what all, so that the implications of the 4th are inclined to be rather on the pleasant side whereas the other is a little too lurid for happy memories.

It rained another inch and a half today and the ground can take it and the cotton in the fields and the vegetation in the gardens look wonderful and the forecast for the morrow is more rain.

Just as I sat down for this little chat, my telephone rang. Carolyn was calling from some place in the Crescent City and said she had a couple of surprises for me. The first and second ones then coming over the wire were those whom you have already guessed, -- Dora and Kay. They said they are getting up this way in 14 days or two weeks. The connection wasn't very good but I assume they may be going on to California from here although who can tell what people, especially honeymooners, may have up their sleeves. It was only the last time I saw Carolyn that I learned the real reason why Kay, la Storm and Dora had to belt back to The Bluff so abruptly from New Orleans on or about the 125 of March. One of Kay's dogs was reported ill. I believe they reached South Carolina before it expired so it must have been able to make a satisfactory confession or whatever it is that dogs have to do when three grown people have to go chasing from Louisiana to the Atlantic seaboard, cancelling all plans and traveling through weather conditions which broke all records for cold at that time of the year. Let's hope marriage will take care of at least some of such temfoolery.

It was drizzling along about 2 o'clock this afternoon when I hazarded the dripping cotton field and oozing mud of the highway and



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got as far as the artist's cabin, taking her mother of your portraits of Abraham Lincoln. To my surprise, she announced that in spite of the recent damp spells, she had finished the cotton picking panel. It is pretty but utterly different from what I had envisioned. How she is going to hitch it up along side the cotton picking one that will join it at the corner of the building, I do not know, but that is her problem. I still think the wash day one is the happiest of all her present creations and I attribute the whole thing to the influence of little Miss Lee.

I can't recall if I told you what a kick I got out of a report she passed along to me a week or so back. I had sent some prospective purchasers of pictures to her after giving them a pretty good sales talk during their Melrose tour. Clemence told me that they were interested in me and what I did for the plantation and she told me with disarming candor:

"I told 'em you jus' live there and that you don't do nuthin'."

I got to giggling in my beard as I crossed the dripping cotton field, carrying the big old panel over my head and praying the Lord a passing breeze wouldn't get under the panel and sail off skyward with me clutching hold of it, for most certainly I should have never turned it free.

I did another round of baby sitting for a little while this evening but I did not remain so late as last night as Celeste blew in about first dark. She had a little difficulty in getting in at the cattle gap, what with the road in such a state of mud but she finally made it. She has had such a wonderful time, such lovely people, the food was so delicious, card playing from dawn 'til dark, wandering about in one's bare feet when one wished to, --the girls were all so darling and they have such a marvelous garbage disposal unit and the kitchen arrangements are just darling, etc., etc., etc., and one can but wonder how such frittering away of one's life can go on so endlessly and obviously so much to the satisfaction of the participants.

The Library of Congress thing came along today and I shall mail it under separate cover. Please, I pray you, don't bother about it at the expense of worth while things of greater moment, such as catching your breath. The other enclosures speak for themselves, and I speak for myself when I repeat how happy I was in having your letter earlier in the week. Spoke with Erma Somperly Willard on the 'phone today and she was happy to know the films turned out nicely.....

7465

Friday, July 15th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Another week played out and one can but wonder at their speed. Thanks to the momentary absence of Wenks plus the bountiful rains that staved off pilgrims, mine has been just the kind I like best, an abundance of mail and a paucity of road runners.

I think I neglected to remark in my letter of yesterday that I was forwarding the Charleston paper carrying the notice of the O'Brien-Register nuptials. I thought you might like to have it to go with the correspondence. I suppose La Storm sent it to me and I can't think why I have been so laggardly about forwarding it to you except that it didn't arrive here until a couple of weeks after the June 15th festivities which explains a portion of its dawdling.

There seemed to be no first class mail today but I cannot complain about that, what with the happiness your letter brought me earlier in the week and the other notes coming from thither and yon. And I think I shall use the freedom the absence of in-coming mail provides to do a bit of reading tonight from I. Bernard Cohen's Benjamin Franklin, a Bobs-Merrill publication which, if my previous attempts to read it are true samples, it will provide me with some early resting of the eyes although my nodding head may provide no particular relaxation for the neck.

I think the Cohen opus is scholarly but somehow it doesn't unroll in too fascinating a fashion and part of this may be due to the reader who is also scholarly but no Scurby.

Clemence came to see me this afternoon, not in the dampness of yesterday but merely in the steam of today, for the humidity is about 99 degrees but the sun was shining which must have made all vegetation and little Miss Hunter start a-jumpin' in their growth. I told her I thought it would be so nice if we could get the murals finished before Mr. Pipes arrived. She thought so, too. We checked over what has to be done in the African House but she did not take any sections home with her as she was expecting to leave for Alexandria where her grandson, Brother, whom I used to teach Mother Goose Rhymes, is



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in the hospital for an appendectomy. She said she plans to return on Sunday and I think the little respite will be good for her before she attacks the cotton picking segment and the pictorial map.

On the purely domestic side, I should report the presence of a flurry among our furred and feathered friends. Grandpa has a new batch of kittens. The last two blessed ~~or~~ events occurred under a nandina bush but this time the stork deposited the new arrivals in the attic of this house which was where their mama was born to begin with. At least the dogs shouldn't have such easy picking in such an elevated nursery as they did when the layette section was slap on the ground.

And in the feathered section, Yucca has a new, half grown white duck, also to be known as Yucca. Eugene's little boy was given him at Easter time but ducks and urban life don't seem to jibe so very well and so Yucca has come down here to see how rural life agrees with him. I introduced him to the place by removing him from his cardboard traveling box into surroundings that must seem wonderfully liquid and verdant to one who has only had a little dish to splash around in and only a close cropped little grass plot on which to frolic. For his new habitat is in the quant-cour, hard by the big old sugar pot where a pool of water stands the year 'round to make life easy on the iris, butterfly lilies, spearmint and so on. I tossed a few cubes of bread into the water just before turning him out of his traveling box and when he saw the water, food and vegetation, he stood up on his toes and quacked mightily, --and then splashed in. I shouldn't be surprised if his existence here is brief for those nasty dogs across the fence love to pommel everything living to death but I have fired a little house for the bird with an entrance through a picket fence which the hounds can't negotiate and I'm hoping the duck may have sense and luck enough to touch home base whenever the canines descend on him.

It looks like a quiet week end ahead in spite of the fair weather in prospect, for 8 to 10 inches of mud which constitutes the highway at the moment will probably go far in discouraging pilgrims to attempt negotiating the oozy moat. And may a profound peace provide an opportunity for breath-catching at Lyme.....

7467

Sunday, July 17th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Another inch and a half of rain yesterday, followed by a star spangled sky and a cloudless morning until the cotton dusting by air began at noon, whereupon another storm belw in dumping another inch and a half of rain on us. Lucky boll weevils, --their dust laden fodder became perfectly harmless before they could get one good bite and tonight they must be stuffing themselves for all they are worth.

At 8:20 this morning, a servant appeared on the gallery, saying there were some people to see me at the front gate and it looked like they knew me. I met an 82 year old lady, under the big oak. It was Eli Mahiers' mama from Baton Rouge where Dora used to go so often when he lived in Baton Rouge. She had told her children that once before she died, she's like to see Melrose again and wanted to talk with me a little because she felt that if anybody in the world could tell her about Mr. Pipes I would be the one. She said Mr. Pipes had left Herman, writing a little note to her daughter, Eli, in the Art Department at the University of Oklahoma, telling her that he had saved sufficient money to provide himself with a prolonged vacation and that he was going to see friends who wanted him to visit them. He did not say in which direction he was traveling. And so Madam Mahiers and her daughters, Eli, of Herman, and Frances who is Mrs. Brandon of Hachez, have been worrying ever since as has Mr. Pipes' sister, Mary Lou Patterson of Hachez.

I told her I thought I could quiet her fears and did so but asked her not to pass along any more news than that Mr. Pipes was making it alright and that I had heard from him only last week. Madam Mahiers is a sweet lady like Madam Regard is sweet and she had loved Dora and her relief was wonderful to observe.

And so we got her other daughter of Baton Rouge and her son, Henry, and his wife, and we all had a little tour and a chat with cherry on the back gallery until 11 o'clock and back they headed for Baton Rouge, everyone seemingly delighted.



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Celeste, Madam Regard, J. H. and I dined alone, Pat being somewhere, probably flying. Along with the fried chicken went some delicious stuffed peppers from the lucca gallery,-- the peppers, not the stuffing, and Celeste put the finishing touches on the refreshments she intended serving at 3 o'clock when Father Roble was to bring two guests from Pittsburg following a tour from 2 to 3 of Melrose which he had asked Celeste to make arrangements for with me. The ladies across the fence said they would siesta until 2:30 and I agreed to pick up Father Roble and his two ladies, and give them the tour before going to the refreshment bar. I waited alone on the gallery from 1:50 until 3:10 when the ladies stirred inside the house. Father Roble and his ladies arrived at 3:45. We did a tour, following the initial contact and Celeste was definitely on the rude side. You would have thought she had been the one most inconvenienced. After the tour, we returned across the fence for cake and ice cream which the guests downed and hurried off to a five o'clock dinner engagement at the rectory. Fits were had after the people had left and tomorrow night, never being able to resist a party, Celeste plans to go to the Lambres in Bermuda who are giving a party for the two Pennsylvania ladies. And so things turn in the pilgrimage section.

Saturday's post contained a dab of odds and ends but nothing of particular interest. Some gentleman named Briley sent a snapshot when here for the Alexandria Town Talk. From what he has to say in his letter, I gather he is on the carcked side.

From Kay's letter, I gather it was written before she talked with me on the telephone on Thursday or Friday night, and from Ida's, I gather she might have been planning to see some of the outfit at the Petit Salon, but as I have no notion as to what the Petit Salon may be, --a tea house, hair-do place or restaurant, I am quite in the dark as to what might have been cooking.

My radion at 6 this morning reported NewYork as sweltering at 76 at that early hour which must have indicated a sizzling day just ahead unless, by chance, you all got some of our cooling showers which have a way of jumping up the humidity but lowering the thermometer. And so the new week begins and I shall be so interested to learn if you get a dab of week end respite.....

0747

7469

*Tomorrow the butterfly  
will unfold*

Monday, July 18th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Today's weather has been an unreasonable fac-simile of yesterday's. The sun in the morning impelled every planter in the Parish to crank up the air planes and dust was flying in every direction until a little afternoon when the clouds rolled up and washed all the ghastly dew away.

According to the local planter the two hundred and fifty dollars for each dusting is worth the gamble since it is the daily boll weevil luncheon bill, estimated at five thousand dollars that is trying to be avoided. So much for the aspects of dollars and more or less sense in plantation management so far as the cotton crop goes at this season of the year. I am holding the thought that the boll weevils are suffering from poor petites this season for I figure if cotton is rolling mightily within another 60 days, that will be an excellent time to point out to the powers that the big house, the African House and Yucca all need re-shingling.

This morning along about seven o'clock the artist sent her helper to teat the second panel of the cotton section of the murals to her house. At 9:30 she passed this way herself and together we went and sat for a while to admire what has been accomplished thus far. Once this cotton picking panel has been achieved and the pictorial map painted, the murals, save for a bit of finishing touches, will be completed. I think the artist will breathe a sigh of relief and I shall be ready to take on the carpenters and finishers to put the work in its proper setting.

The ladies across the fence are in the 7th heaven of delight at the prospect of Marville guests arriving on Tuesday and departing on Wednesday. Their house servant is giving them some cause for worry as her health seems delicate. Celeste delivered her over to the lady doctor the other day who found mal-nutrition the girl's difficulty but that complaint seems to be a difficult ailment for cure in these parts. Quick results are frequently the things which are most likely to convince local patients as to the value of the medicine or treatment.



7470

And besides, --and it's a big one, Carrie, the servant, is able to read and she saw in some paper the advertisement of a New Orleans doctor who guaranteed to cure anything with alacrity if one would contact him for an appointment. Carrie wrote for said appointment, following her visit to the L. dy doctor and was perfectly delighted when, by return mail, the New Orleans quack advised her that on second thought it wouldn't really be important for her to actually call at the doctor's office inasmuch as he could send her the precise medicine she needed if she, as a starter, would forward him thirty five dollars, after which additional medicine, if required, could be supplied by mail. Carrie thought that was sure enough her doctor alright and so I suppose business will be brisk for that doctor in the days immediately ahead, so far as that particular Melrose patient is concerned.

I should explain, perhaps, that Carrie is a sister of Dooley who broke into the store a while back. To understand the vast solace which voe-doo provides for those who believe in it, it is important to keep such a fact as the following in mind. Dooley's stupid mama made a big racket about her boy having been detained for a few days in jail for breaking into the store, declaring that "they are always telling lies about my child". Dooley finally confessed that it was he who broke into the store but for the stupid mother, a firm believer in voodoo, the admission by her son of his depredation made not the slightest difference since, as she explains it, "they made him do it". "They" is always pretty indefinite but it actually boils down to some person or persons who dislikes her or her family who employ the services of another voodoo doctor not in their favor to conjure up evils that will force her child to break into stores against his own intentions, the fact being that since voodoo works both ways, the evil that people can conjure up against your child's intention is just as great or greater as the powers of the practitioner in the same profession who is employed to ward off evil spirits. With this in mind, it is easy enough to understand how all thought about anyone having to go to jail for a misdeed is taken casually enough since, naturally, it is not the fault of the culprit but merely the strength of the evil witch doctor.

Although this must sound a little tiresome, I set it down for your attention since the understanding of it may make more comprehensible the strange mental reactions which continue to obtain in these parts in this year of grace, 1955.....

7471

*the first blossom  
of the season*

Tuesday, July 19th, 1955.

Memorandum:

As indicated in the penciled note on yesterday's memo, the first butterfly lily of the season unfolded today, -- precisely at 4:30 this afternoon. Tonight its fragrance glorifies the atmosphere of the front gallery and I shall leave this memo unsealed tonight in order that I may enclose the flower and fragrance herewith just before mail time.

Marvelous to relate, it didn't rain today. Big old thunder clouds rolled up during the afternoon over the Montrose hills and there was much detonations from on high, but the blue sky held its lines over Cane River and the sun shone with an intensity that was dazzling.

From beginning to end, my day was a hurly burly, tintured only by the pleasure of a single piece of mail, --the photographs straight from Lyme. I find they show the murals wonderfully well and I can only wonder what the shots will be like when the big cameras really get trained on them.

Quite unexpectedly, and quite early this morning, well before sun up, J. H. sent me some field hands to serve as gardeners and to make use of such people and yet to avoid having them cut down everything valuable with their hoes, I have to stay pretty close along side. The only damage I discovered at sun down, --I couldn't stay with them all day, was the death of three imposing gourd vines. But fortunately old's gourd on the front gallery of Yucca survived and there will be enough others to provide a harvest in October.

But because my pre-mail time had been so taken up, I paused at the Post Office to examine the photos and was delighted to see how clearly you could probably see the general character of the Baptisin' and perhaps the panel containing Yucca. It was so sweet of little Miss Lee to have the enlargements made so that I could readily see how much she could make of the general character of the murals and I am hoping that



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the acquaintance with them that these shots provide will make a little less boring all the talk I have been making on the subject until that happy time arrives when little Miss Lee and come and observe the creations in their own setting and natural colors for herself.

I did not show the pictures across the fence to which place I journey just after leaving the post office. Neither lady there has ever seen the murals. While I was having a demi tasse, Rosalind Aswell telephoned Celeste, asking to whom she should apply for permission to do some research in the Melrose library. Celeste turned her over to me. She said she wanted to come right away, --it was 9:10. She got here at 11, joined Eugene, Dr. Alban and me for dinner and departed for home immediately thereafter, explaining she had been out of sorts when she had telephoned and really didn't want to do any research. She seems to be at cross purposes with herself and the world but was rather on the gayer side when she left. She recommended several books she had recently read including one by V. Holland: "Oscar Wild's Son" or some such title, V. Holland being the younger of the poet's two children.

And just as I handed her into her car, four or five Oberdykes arrived quite unannounced, --most of them hailing from Kansas, noisy and wonderfully informal as though they had known me from the cradle. As they went out one gate, Clemence came in the other. She startled me when she announced she had finished the cotton picking panel which she had started work on only yesterday. I realized she couldn't possibly do a job that would delight me completely in such a short time. My telephone rang and it was Celeste, inviting me for a drink and to take her house guests on a tour. I told Clemence I would pick up her painting later and I went head with a tour. Secretaries were waiting for me when I finished with that but eventually I got over to Clemence's, finding my fears had been mildly correct and gave her a bank note from Lyme and returned to Melrose to find some pilgrims awaiting me

And so the day ran out and I still think the clothes line the prettiest panel and it's doubly so because Lyme shines through it so delightfully.

Thanks to your gift, my day has been the happier and after doing the mail, I shall collapse for a few moments to turn through the pictures again before folding up my beard. I so much hope this very first butterfly lily of the season retains a faint suggestion of its marvelous perfume.....

7473

Wednesday, July 20th, 1955.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your elegant letter of Monday in today's post. And how surprising that it should have arrived on Wednesday, since a letter mailed in Matchitoches on a Monday never comes to hand before the following Thursday.

And how nice to learn of some of the things you have been up to and how you made the most of a two hour respite on the week end. I may add that at coffee this morning the lady mentioned her delight in having had such a sweet letter from Lyme.

And thanks for sending along the clipping from the New York Times concerning Louisiana iris. I have read about half of it and shall finish the balance on the morrow. I must inquire about the identity of the author, Camilla Truar. I am wondering if this could be the former Camilla Bradley who operated a flower and garden magazine in New Orleans at one time. I shall make inquiry.

As I was plucking the first butterfly lily of the season at dawning to enclose in your memo from here, I was pleasantly surprised to see Will Rogers, the carpenter, coming in my direction, J. H. having sent him probably because he couldn't think of anything himself to give him to do. I was glad to make use of him, making some shelves, putting in window panes, blown out by a recent storm at the big house, tightening latches on doors and so on.

I was glad I had determined on having a shelf made over the door in my bath room. In explaining what I wanted to the carpenter, I suggested he removed the buzzer which had been attached to the door casing along about 1945 when a wire was run from the Madam's room to Yucca. In pointing out the object for removal,



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I was vaguely started whenas my hand passed over it, much heat issued from it. This was puzzling to the carpenter and me, too, since the wire to the big house had long since been disconnected. This required us to trace what turned out to be three separate wires, two of them leading behind an armoire behind which were piled endless Belle family portraits and the plunder of the ages. This took hours to move and eventually we discovered that although the main wire had been disconnected, the two secondary ones were plugged into a socket, the latter having somewhat fallen apart with the passage of time. I guess it was just plain luck that the hot instrument hadn't intensified its heat to the point of potential disaster.

Before mail time, I followed my instincts to drop by the home of the artist. I know not if that was a good idea or not. Obviously she is anxious to have the murals finished and she was working on the pictorial map, supposedly using the Melrose Plantation plate which it will more or less duplicate on a larger scale, -- or so I thought. You can readily envision my surprise, therefore when I discovered that she had already made some progress on the painting and, --and this is the surprise, --she had painted Yucca along side the St. Augustin Church of the Children of Strangers, --situated on the West bank of the river, thus bringing Cane River between Yucca and the African House. I are people, as for instance, little Miss Denhome, who has absolutely no sense of direction or how any places with which they are familiar would look on a map. The clerk is another who always insists that Cane River on the Land of Uncle Tom mat ought to be on the East and not on the West side of Red River. I take it our artist must be one of these. For all I know, primitive artists may be somewhat primitive in the matter of geography, too, but somehow I never think of Robina as a primitive.

Carelyn telephoned from Baton Rouge to say the State movie cameras would probably arrive on Cane River to take the Farm to Market Road film, --from here to Bermuda, today, but, although they may have come, I did not see them. She said she was going to spend the week end with her parents in Marshall and would try to stop off for a few shots at the paintings. She said the newly weds planned to get up this way Thursday or Friday. Isn't it odd they never use a telephone. Well, so things rock along and again my gratitude for my happy day, thank to your letter. Do hope Manhattan is cooling off a dab.....

7475

Thursday, July 21st, 1955.

Memorandum:

The murals are finished, this 21st day of July, and I'm wondering about when it was she took her first slap at the initial section, --I suppose about the second week in June.

She came to see me at 1:15 this noon. Grambling College was scheduled to appear at 1:30 but got here ahead of time. I told the carpenter and gardener awaiting instructions for the afternoon's stint to entertain the college while I went into a huddle with the artist. She gave every appearance of being exhausted and whated to finish the couple of touching up jobs that needed her sure touch so that she might forget murals for a long time. You know and I know that she will be tapping at my door about Saturday, wanting to do some murals. And so while Grambling waited, I sat with her as she gave the big house a fresh coat of paint, lightening it up wonderful in contrast to its appearance in the I.W.S. film. And when that had been achieved, I casually jockeyed her into the cotton chopping section and asked her how she thought a white-ish line around the interior of the cabin, enclosing the wedding scene, would look. She liked the idea and proved her point that it would enhance the value of the wedding. Taking another tack, I edged her over to the cotton picking section and finally, after admiring it much, I asked her if she thought the horse, attached to the cotton wagon, --and originally painted the same redish coloring, would look if said horse were darker to contrast with the red wagon and the white cotton heaped therein. It was as though the idea were her own and lo! the horse metamorphosed from red to black in a jiffy. After a little further chat about the church in the same section, she somehow got the idea that there ought to be some black lines to indicate some steps and others to indicate a window as the extent of whiteness seemed excessive, and I went off to the Grambling graduates and left the artist, happy as a clam, in spite of her exhaustion, and when I returned the job was finished.

The carpenter and I accompanied her to her cabin where we picked up the pictorial map, comprising the final section. I gave her the final Abraham Lincoln from Lyme and I suggested she get some rest. Back at the African House, I examined



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the pictorial map. It is alright but proves that it is primitive in spite of the model of the plate which she wanted to emulate. You may recall that at the top of the Melrose Plantation plate there are crossed cotton stalks, to the right and left of which are single pecanes. A little below a compass appears. Miss Hunter made the crossed cotton stalks alright and to the left of them she placed the compass and further to the left of that, --and sort of off no where, she placed one lone, solitary pecane. Period. No pecane or anything else ever got in at the right of the crossed cotton stalks, and so the thing will stand, forever a reminder of her individuality and exhaustion.

The enclosures speak for themselves. I think you will find the Crescent City one quite interesting, particularly in regard to the newly weds, --from whom, by the way, I have heard nothing more. I haven't seen the movie people, coming to record the Farm to Market road film and I haven't heard from any of the people connected with it.

I think you will find Mrs. Mahier's letter both original and sweet. Surely the stationary is extraordinary. I was vaguely surprised that she recommended that I foresake Melrose in favor of The Bluff, for somehow that note didn't seem to jibe quite perfectly with the balance of her letter. Perhaps, in spite of her wisdom, she feels that I must be lonesome at Yucca. So many people somehow get the impression that living at Yucca must be dreadfully God forsaken. Isn't it odd that such an erroneous conception should obtain.

We had another hot day, --hot and humid, until about 7 o'clock tonight when the blue skies became cloudy and gray and a drizzle began that has been falling during the past three hours steadily. We don't actually need the rain but it will do no particular harm, especially as the dusting was done at noon today, the air planes using a liquid dust instead of a dry one, --liquid dust must make odd reading, --and every boll weevil that was going to get knocked out by that performance was out of commission well before the drizzle began. I had coffee along with Celeste this morning and she read me your letter which she thought among better letters anyone was likely to received. For once in a blue moon, I agreed with her.

Another butterfly lily opened tonight and will be enclosed herewith on the morrow. Celeste said she thinks you are the finest person she ever knew. I agreed with her on that point, too.....

7477

Friday, July 22nd, 1955.

Memorandum:

Poor you.....for the radio is talking about 96 degree temperatures in your neighborhood and usually those thermometers from which the Weather Bureau takes its readings are located far above the street and so never record the temperature that human beings have to undergo.

All during the past week or two, we have been so fortunate in the coolness coming with the afternoon showers so that the 72 degrees that usually followed the showers carried through the night to make sleeping so pleasant.

The enclosure from Robina doesn't give much news but I pass it along regardless. Apparently that Briarwood number is really anxious to learn about the romance or at least how it had its inception. It seems a little odd she apparently never dreamed that Melrose had anything to do about it.

I was delighted when the artist came to see me today for she seemed greatly rested and thus was capable of enjoying the fruits of her labors. I made her sit down in a chair in the middle of the mural room and we sat and talked and laughed about the various little episodes connected with the doing of the work. I am hoping she may have sense enough to slow down for a week or so before she undertakes anything quite so extensive during the summer months at least.

Zelma came to see me and I showed her the murals. She said she would like to do something by way of adding her contribution to the display, --demonstrating a certain nobility and breadth of mind, I thought, since she and La Hunter never hit it off too well together. I had given Zelma the key to the upper chamber and so she had had an opportunity to glance around a little while I was bidding goodbye to some pilgrims. When I joined her, she said she didn't have to go back to the hospital until August 8th and she would have plenty of time to do some sewing for me, if I wished.



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She said what she had in mind was to make a patchwork quilt for the little day bed in the mural room, with the patches being in the major colors appearing in the paintings, - reds, blues, greens yellows and so on. As in the billiard examples from Lyme forever coming my way, I am always so touched when the pure in heart rise up to further a cause and I told Zelma that only the people I liked best were having a part in the African House doings and that I should be delighted to have a patch work quilt for the day bed. At present, the bed has a white covering and a patch work one would be so much more in harmony with the entire room. The bed stands against the bannister, a portion of which shows in both the picture taken by I.S.W., showing the Yucca pannel and also the one showing the place where the Lyme endowed clothes line panorama was latter to be placed. Carolyn telephoned from Alexandria, saying pow-wows with the movie people in Baton Rouge had knocked her plans out and might she stop here on her way to Marshall to spend the Sabbath with her parents. She might.

One of the production managers in the movie company doing the work for the State was an underground operator in Denmark during the war, and, as might be expected, did not shelve his ethics of the underground when peace returned. This must present a problem for those associated with him.

Speaking of the New Orleans evening Carolyn remarked that things somehow took on a shame-faced atmosphere when the newlyweds invited her to dine out with them and the bride took care of the check. That seems to me so very bad, it is difficult to imagine Kaycountenancing any vaguest suggestion that she might be handling the pocketbook exclusively. Surely those two have much to learn and let us hope they learn it before it's too late.

Carolyn thought it would be a good idea to photograph the local murals after the molding had been put in place, which seems to me a good idea since the white lines will undoubtedly give greater strength to the colors in the pictures. I was interested in learning that the script for the mural story was ready for holiday, for I am in favor of having all such data on ice, as it were, when the autumn season gets under way in the magazine world. The newspaper stories, of course, be started on their way in August. And so things turn as another week end begins and may it be an ever so quiet a time in Lyme.....

7479

Sunday, July 24th, 1955.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Wednesday letter in Saturday's post. It was so good to catch a glimpse of what was cooking and I am holding the thought that the little outing in the country for the birthday party turned out ever so nicely and that good food and a measure of fresh ozone all got mixed up together in such a setting.

And may I thank you for the clipping showing the ancient oil of olive jar which appears, from the caption, to have been in use for centuries before their brethren found their way to this bend of the river. I shall glance at the local ones with even more interest each time I pass their way hence forth.

I fiddled for Fadiman on Wednesday night but somehow never could catch up with him, much to my regret, for I should have loved to hear what he and his guests, especially Miss Emerson, had to say on the subject up for discussion.

I am writing W H O, Des Moines, to ask if they will not broadcast the program after 10:30 at night, as they frequently do other interesting broadcasts on the National system. I think perhaps they will and it will be so nice to have the particle you sent when writing to them regarding the program.

Carolyn passed this way en route to Marshall, stopping off to leave a little ebony carving for the African House. She said she hoped to pass this way either late tonight or early in the morning, en route to New Orleans, with a view to taking a picture in color of Clemence figuring out a problem on the bare slabs of the African House, showing one of the painted panels in the background. As I am expecting a flock of carpenters to get the things permanently installed with tomorrow's dawn, this will be her last opportunity to snap a picture of the slabs without the covering panels and so I suppose she will make it. She says she will be bogged down in New Orleans for 2 or 3 weeks and so will be unable to get the pictures in color, after their final installation until mid August, with the varnishing taken care of the moldings in place and so on. This will be ample time for the mo



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of course, and the black and white stuff can go to the newspapers any old time. Probably Holiday or Look would use a five rather than a nine combination of illustrations for reproductions, --in an This would mean that the pictorial map, obviously the keystone to the thing, would have to appear as an overall of the plantation activities, and then the two panels in each of the four corners would appear as a single picture, --thus making five reproductions. For the newspapers, probably different publications could be supplied with single sections, --half of each order, which, if photographed thus in black and white, would require 9 shots.

Saturday was a wonderfully quiet day in these parts and I was quite alone from 10 a.m. until 5:15 when the first set of pilgrims for the day put in an appearance. I was less lucky today, however, as the weather was fine and traffic in road runners heavy. I had appointments with some Milwaukee million friends of the R. B. Williamses, and another appointment with the Dean of Women at Northwestern, --Miss Winters and guests, and on top of these a flock of people, some of whom I saw and some whom I did not. I was delighted to see Ora was able to make it with her Wisconsin guests. She brought me some peach pie which I sampled tonight after returning from across the fence from supper and it was good. Ora also wanted to leave an envelope as a contribution toward the murals. On opening it later, I discovered it to be a bank note containing the likeness of Mr. A. Hamilton. This will come in handy in purchasing beads of the proper size for the artist to reproduce some of her murals on, with a view to their eventual sale by primitive enthusiasts on quitting the African House, --if any.

I was getting into a mood to do a dab of reading along about 6:30 when Dr. Rand appeared, bearing a pie. This must have been my pie day. I asked him about the identity of Mrs. Truax who wrote the article about the irises you clipped for me from the New York Times. He said it was indeed the same lady who had operated the New Orleans magazine. She married shortly after that publication suspended.

Pat did not appear at dinner today. Celeste said his step-father had telephoned from Houston last night, saying that Pat had better come over to see about putting Eugenia in an institution for alcoholics. Isn't it a pity the tailspin Pat's mother seems to have maintained so steadily downward during the past 10 or 15 years. --More butterfly lilies are blowing and it is so nice being able to enclose one every now and then.....

7481

Monday, July 25th, 1955.

Memorandum:

The enclosure from Hodding Carter is the thing.....

Frankly, I was astonished that the great Carter should be writing to offer his services in doing an article on the African House murals.

I shall write him later tonight, expressing my appreciation but declining on grounds that magazine arrangements were made prior to receipt of his response, and asking if he would care to have the Greenville paper run a story with illustrations, both to be supplied from Melrose.

I have no doubt the Carter name would carry great weight with the Editors of the magazines he mentions but the article which has already been prepared is pretty good, I think, and I see no reason why, except for publicity purposes, the Reverend Carter should be handed the recompense that would be his, --just like that. It is gratifying, nevertheless, that he has expressed his desire to do the story. Obviously there is a story to be told and if the magazines can't publish it without the Carter signature, then I shall rest content to let what publicity may come to the paintings by the daily press.

Carolyn came in late last night. She had in mind taking some color pictures of Clemence both in the African House and outside where a great spray of purple crepe myrtle projected from the greenery of the hedge so that Clemence in colorful attire, could stand beneath it and one could glimpse the blue doors and pink walls of the African House in the background. I recommended that black and white pictures be taken, too, both of the individual panels inside and the general aspect of things outside, for there were huge white clouds against an intense blue and I thought that while the former was excellent for the magazines, the latter would be equally good for the newspapers. She worked all morning with Clemence, knocking off a little after ten o'clock to run into town to get a shot of the river front, clouds included, and a picture of the Lemme house for which picture cards will be made.



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She departed after dinner, heading for New Orleans via Lafayette and Baton Rouge. The pictures will be processed promptly for the newspapers and the final color shots taken in the African House when the frames are all in order. I was happy to find a workman on my doorstep at 5 this morning but it turned out that the carpenters were alright but Fugabou was drunk and as he is best at varnishing when not drunk, I set the carpenters to putting in window panes and doing general labor and Fugabou went home at noon. I am hoping sobriety may have caught up with him before another dawn.

I had hoped to catch the noon news when I came from dinner, but the artist was here, asking for some medicinal plants she had seen growing in the wood lot. She had many things to tell me about her happy adventures of yesterday and before she left, Pilgrims came. They were followed by more and so the evening or afternoon ran out and I was glad when dusk settled over Cane River.

At 3 o'clock while busy with pilgrims, a telephone call came through from Western Union. I don't recall the precise wording but it ran something like this:

"Statesboro, Georgia.

Unexpectedly called back to The Bluff. Please address mail there. James."

Well, at least that lets out the necessity of a Hatches visit to the family for July. With the finishing touches being put on things at the African House, I am not sorry the newly weds are not passing this at the moment. I'm wondering why they had to wait until they got into the State of Georgia before wiring me. I never saw people with so much money so disinclined to use a telephone.

There's such a pretty new moon hanging over the Montrose Hills and in the sun dial that I feel inclined after doing the mail to fortify myself with a tall lovely glass of Tender Leaf and relaxat to Cabellere's Strauss Waltzes

Did I mention I had learned from Dr. Rand that Miss Brandly had indeed become Mrs. Truar, --I believe I did.

I saw Pat at breakfast and he seemed much as usual and naturally I didn't mention Houston, although I did want to ask if he saw the brief mention or rather the short article in the Houston Chronicle of yesterday concerning the local artist. Well, so things turn, and now to the mail, after that to the telepathy department beside St. Giggins.....

1845

7483

Tuesday, July 26th, 1955.

Memorandum:

I feel so much rested somehow. It is true that I am pleasantly tired but not dead tired and that is a somewhat novel experience of late which I find so much to my liking, I think I shall cultivate it assiduously for a week or two.

The thermometer has not been going much above 95 of late, and I don't seem to mind that at all. It is wonderful, even as in human temperatures, how the difference of just a few degrees will make for so much difference in comfort, for last year when the thermometer ran over 100 degrees for something like 40 days in a straight row, it really seemed ever so much hotter although the humidity was not so great as at present. But the skies have been marvelously cobalt of late, with huge old puffs of cotton like clouds that suggest mountains of snow and their cool white against an equally cool blue seems to produce some pleasant psychological effect.

The workmen appeared again this morning, --and extra one among them and Fugabou still half drunk. But if I wait for him to get sobered up a little, the African House will never get finished and so I put all of the men to work and what kind of varnishing a half drunken field hand does; I wouldn't be sure, for I tried not to look too closely at the results of his handiwork. But somehow the day's stint got finished and the moldings are up and painted another coat of white, and the whole business looks mighty pretty

The expert carpenters are putting up some real estate signs for some group in which Dan is a member, advertising Pecane Park in the suburbs of Hatchiteches and so the local carpenters got through as best they could and I am satisfied.

If they return at dawning on the morrow, I shall set them to work, using some old lumber to make one window shelf each for the four windows. This will have a dual advantage since it will tend to cut some of the intense indirect glare of the sun, reflected up from the greensward into the shadow of the projecting roof of the buildings, and, secondly, on each shelf I shall have



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a big earth pot placed, slap in the middle of each window, each pot being planted with a big gob of Giant's Beard, --you recall that grass which forms the borders for so many pathways about the gardens. This will give a touch of life and greenery without introducing too much color to distract the eye from the gaiety of the murals stretching to right and left of each window. And as Giant's beard, --I enclose a sample, remains green the year 'round and remains jaunty if given half a chance, I think it will add a pleasant note to a room already gay enough.

When I went to the big house this morning, the cook called my attention to Carolyn's suitcase which she had left here. She had such a pile of photographic stuff to be loaded into her car that after she had squeezed in the last of that stuff, she must have forgotten anything else which probably was a must, nevertheless. I got the thing boxed and sent off by parcel post to New Orleans in the morning post as I suppose it will be a couple or three weeks before she gets back this way.

This morning I got off an air mail to the newly weds, asking them to advise me at their convenience as to the status of la Storm's health for the more I think of their telegram, the more I wonder if it was perhaps her health that impelled them to cut short their Louisiana visit.

I caught up with a couple of re-broadcasts of the Presidential remarks following his return from Geneva and enjoyed listening to him. Oddly enough Mr. Eisenhower somehow creates the impression for me that there is very slight, if any, relationship with his Cabinet members, none of whom appear to me to enjoy much public popularity or enthusiasm. Even though he always seems to support them pretty loyally, there is some manner in which he succeeds in remaining in but remote association with them and their several policies, in spite of his endorsement of all their works. This somehow seems unusual for in both the cases of Messrs Roosevelt and Truman, I, for one, always somehow thought of some sympathetic strain as existing between the President and the individual Cabinet member to such a point as to make them seem part and parcel of the whole official family of the Executive branch whereas the ultra conservatives in the Eisenhower Cabinet never seem to be part and parcel of the President in spite of his support of them. I must try and diagnose this impression a little for my own satisfaction. And now to the mail and thence to dreamland.....

7485

Wednesday, July 27th, 1955.

Memorandum:

The enclosed clipping is from the Houston Chronicle of July 24th, 1955, being Sunday, and I mention this as I am not certain if the date line appears on the clipping.

The reproductions seem to be clear, as newspaper clippings go, but the article itself is so boiled down and mangled that I feel quite certain its author would scarcely recognize it. The author, by the way, feels that the lateness in this publication would suggest that the Chronicle would scarcely buy a story about the same lady but I feel that if the paper takes months to get a round to publish anything, one might assume that it would be mid winter before they got around to print a story that other papers would have set forth in August. Besides, I feel that the new story could be slanted at the African House murals, as a thing, rather than the personality of the painter, and thus have a pretty good chance of getting into Houston print eventually. Besides, there are other Houston papers, although the Chronicle is the best.

Our day was a reasonable facsimile of yesterday, up until 4 p.m., with much blue sky, big puffy, white clouds and the thermometer at 97. Then came a local storm with gusts of wind of hurricane proportions, breaking limbs from trees and generally flattening vegetation, most of which will regain an upright position during the night, I suppose. Three quarters of an inch of rain fell here but Hachiteches never got a drop.

This morning I got the African House pretty well rigged up and it looks quite pretty now. I planted Giant's Beard in



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four big earthen jars and stood one each on the window ledges the carpenters made for me. I had all the benches removed and the grass rug taken out so that the wooden floor could be mopped first with soap suds and then a couple of other goings-over with clear warm water. A couple of statuettes, such as the wine bottles, painted and designed to look like the Virgin Mary, --what a idea for wine bottles, which Blythe had given me a while back, following one of her trips to Mexico, and these with a few other rather crude things in metal, resting on the gray shelf just below the murals, produced quite a pleasant effect.

The artist came to see me in the afternoon, just before the storm. She seemed to like the appearance of the room housing her pictures. She said Jack Rogers, the Alexandria visitor of yesterday, had stopped by her house yesterday and told her he hoped the Henrys had paid her at least a thousand dollars for her work., all of which goes to show that Mr. Rogers has never taken the economic pulse of the Henrys.

I was perfectly delighted this afternoon when going to the store on stumbling over a big, beautifully yellowed pumpkin which J. H. said weight 57 and a half pounds. I told him it would look so pretty in front of one of the blue doors of the African House. Then and there he said he would send it over to me in the morning.

Alton Johnson came to see me this afternoon. He says he is leaving for Detroit on Saturday to attend the tour of the General Motors plants, as did the winners of last year's State and Regional prizes, this trip being Alton's second or third. He said that on Saturday night, General Motors gives a dinner for all State and Regional prize winners at which time the first rate winner is named for the nation. Naturally he goes with hopes. He isn't sure if he will return to Melrose or not, before going to Los Angeles in anticipation of entering the University there. I suppose his decision will depend in part upon the chance that he might be named national champion car designer. I am so glad to know he is going to be in Los Angeles for that will enable me to put a bee in Irma's and Farley's bonnets and I'm sure they will be delighted to have the youth out to North Hollywood for dinners, etc., which will, I am sure, afford pleasure both for guest and the host and hostess. So things turn and so I must turn to the mail and thence to the finishing of Cohen's B. Franklin.....

7487

Thursday, July 28th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Another day, much after the pattern of Wednesday, but without showers, although surrounding neighborhoods get enough to spread a coolness of the upper 80's, in contrast to the upper 90's obtaining all about. And so, with the humidity in the upper 90's, Melrose and Manhattan are as one in the matter of mid-summer weather.

The enclosure from Dora speaks for itself. I am so glad to know that it was Farley's presence at The Bluff and not any indisposition on la Stern's part that called for the sudden flight to South Carolina on the part of the newly weds following their house hunting efforts, so successfully concluded, in the Crescent City.

I wonder if Dora realizes that the lady he mentions as owner of the apartment is a sister of Mrs. Hedding Carter. Perhaps yes, perhaps no. As both ladies were Wurline sisters, I understand there are millions in the parental till and I shall be keeping this fact in mind when I read "Where Main Street Meets the River" in the opening chapters of which, I am told, Mr. Carter mentions the straightened circumstances in which he and his wife began their newspaper enterprises. I could be wrong, but it has always seemed to me that any young couple being pinched by poverty, must feel the squeeze much less than a parallel couple one of the parties of which may have a father and mother possessed of thumping bank accounts. Surely there must be quite a psychological difference between a couple floundering through a Sarah, confronted not by nothing save endless burning sands, as opposed to the couple covering the same desert, mindful that in the event of ultimate disaster, a verdant oasis is known to exist and may be turned to in an ultimate extremity.

I had to giggle in my beard at supper tonight at J. H.'s latest manifestation of the tendency on his part, inherited from his mama, of following up one gesture in a given direction by another, alt.

.....  
 that "some like the green shadings and some not at all"  
 the pretty and call it "art", make it look natural"  
 "we are all the time about the picture goes on with everybody probably  
 a pretty lot of the killing time with this tape since it  
 isn't a better time for "socialism" and the religious moralization  
 of the summer which will supply most of the conversation in  
 the days of weeks hence when the picture water will have gotten a bit  
 dried out.



7488

the first one has already filled the bill. I may have mentioned that I had cast eyes of yearning at a beautiful big yellow pumpkin I stumbled over in the store day before yesterday and how J. H., overhearing my exclamation as to its beauty, sent it along in a wheel barrow to me a few hours later, the pumpkin approaching proportions sympathetic to Cinderella's gold coach, as said vegetable weighs 57 pounds. I placed it in front of one of the blue doors of the African House when it gave these appearance, when viewed from as far as the big house, as being something akin to the rising moon. And I was delighted with this great golden globe and had dismissed the whole thing from my mind when at supper tonight, J. H. remarked:

"Ah, by the way, you said something about wanting another big pumpkin.....I think I know where I can get one for you....I'll send it over to you tomorrow....."

As for my response, I merely remarked that I didn't want to seem insatiable but that a second pumpkin of like girth would hold down the other blue door very prettily. For once J. H. and his mama, jointly or singly, everget a notion that if a little was good and a lot was better, there was never any hope of staving off their impulse to round up more of the same commodity, regardless of its nature.

And so, at tomorrow's dawning, I suppose I may expect another golden moon to be brought forth in a wheel barrow, and this will only further the conversation which seems to have started the whole plantation talking, --all about Lestan and the pumpkin. The clerk who has little time for anything other than what staples the plantation produces, can't understand what I want of the pumpkin to start with and besides it will rot down in a week or so. The overseer who likes pumpkins in the field and slightly inclines in my direction because he suspects I like pumpkins as he does, even though not in the field, points out that I kept one hanging on the Yucca gallery for six months last season. Then the colored folks who love to talk endlessly about anything of a speculative nature on the vegetable level, speculate as to how Lestan will be able to preserve it intact, --some by saying he will probably war it, other by guessing that he "will take out its guts and fill the shell with sand" and others who opine that "some folks have green thumbs and some has hands for the pretty and he'll probably jus' make it last natural".... and so all the talk about the pumpkin goes on, with everybody probably having a lot of fun, killing time with this topic since it isn't quite time yet for "so-sahOshun" and the religious manifestation of late summer which will supply most of the conversation a couple of weeks hence when the pumpkin matter will have grown a bit thread bare.

7489

Friday, July 29th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Another week come and gone, another week-end unfolding. May it present a suggestion of repose for little Miss Lee, after such a stifling week in the environs of Lyme.

Today, ten days after the initial butterfly lily unfolded, three big old stalks of the Orinoco variety unburdened themselves of their huge, red leathery blossoms and the anana crop may be said to be under way. I had half supposed that the havoc wrought by the March 27th freeze, might obviate any hopes for a 1955 crop, but it would appear that 1955 is coming through on that level, even as it did on others. I am always twice glad for a crop because many a soul will be passing this way between now and November who somehow have never seen bananas of the giant variety either in flower or in fruit and they always seem to be interested. And then, too, there is always the pleasure I experience in November, when the crop is harvested, of hanging some of the bunches in the chapel as *bandelieres*, --they look so pretty in that setting.

I had no pilgrims today, marvelous to relate, --at least none whom I saw although a servant told me there were some. But I did see Lythe and Mrs. Gordon Stafford along about 4 o'clock. Elythe said that King had talked of nothing but the murals since Sunday and that she had come at his pushing to see for herself. Well, she had a look on her own hook and obviously she found the business rather more remarkable than she had supposed. She ended up by saying that while it was perfectly true that I was often a bag, still she had to admit that in the present instance, at least, I had turned a good trick. I do think she was entertained by what she had to see but I must say I think Doreatha and Marine, --Doreatha, the cook, and Ezra's wife while Marine you may remember as Log's wife. They passed this way this mornin' to get some tomatoes to fry from the Yucca vines, --getting not frying them from the vines and I let them have a look at the upper room. Marine



7490

must be about 8 months and 29 days in pregnancy but she made the stairs alright and I helped her with her little two year old boy. Well, Doreatha and Marine apparently hadn't had so much fun in years as they examined the several sections, discovering in each a variety of personalities they readily recognized, and withal laughing and hollering with unrestrained glee. I had to laugh at their genuine merriment and I figured Marine in particular could stand all the entertainment she could round up these days.

A note in today's post from Madam Mahiers which I shall enclose.

She such a nice person, I like to try keeping up with her.

Her trip to Natchez is to visit her daughter, Frances Mahiers Brandon, of course. I hope they all handle the Pipes business adroitly but I'm not at all concerned how they actually do manage it for I must say Dora hasn't done much by way of cooperating with me as to expressing his wishes as to what, if anything, I am to say when his ancient friends and kinsmen appeal to me for news as to what in the world has happened to him, if he be dead or alive, etc., etc. I am still puzzled that he didn't include his sister, Madam Mahier, her daughters, the Harnesses and so on in the list of those to receive wedding announcements.

And speaking of the newly weds, their new apartment, as I understand at 630 St. Anne, is just around one corner or another from 624 Pirates Alley and it is my understanding that the bride is leaning heavily on her neighbor to keep the neighborhood spirit bubbling during the ensuing season.

And now that Dora has taken up both the still and the movie camera, perhaps he and his neighbor can compare notes on the aspects of that Art and the wife can keep the home fires in the Wurline apartment burning to the general satisfaction of all concerned and particularly herself, I hope.

I have no plans for the week end and so assume, as usually happens in such circumstances, that I shall be fairly busy. We had no rain today and that may make for free wheeling in behalf of road runners. Well, so be it. And may there be showers, if showers there must be, during the pilgrimage hours to afford me a week end of comparative repose.....

7491

Sunday, July 31st, 1955.

Memorandum:

Gently I gasp as I write the date line and realize for the 21st time today in so doing, that July is about all wrapped up and August is about to make her bow. Somehow it seems but yesterday was the last of March and birthday time. I shudder at the thought of how Time must whiz for those approaching the 100 mark.

The most unpleasant episode of the week end was the murder of my little white duck by a big old black dog. I be-labored the murderer with a hoe when I came up on him suddenly, just after I had heard the duck squak. He dropped the victim but the poor thing expired forthwith. And so I placed him beneath a banana plant and went to the end of the gallery to get a spade to prepare a grave. Picture my astonishment when turning back, I discovered that the woff had dashed back and grabbed the remains and raced off. There are so many stray dogs in the neighborhood and so few of them well fed but at least one of them ought to sleep on a full stomach tonight.

My pilgrims were limited this week end, thanks, in part, I suppose, to torrential rains all about us on Saturday which never did reach us, save for a little sprinkle. Tyler, Texas and New Orleans made it this afternoon but their preserve in both instances was more for time killing than anything else.

Saturday's post brought a large gift package from The Bluff, sent by Dora. The contents impressed me as to their quality, --a flock of white shirts, scads of handkerchiefs (white), some elegant dress socks of silk, some striking hand painted neckties and, of all things, a box of cigars. As for the latter, I know Clemence can use them, and although I know she is lying when she tells me she smokes them, still they provide her with even more pleasure than if she did, for actually it is her "helper" who finishes them off, thereby saving her seasick



7492

a measure of pleasure to boot, since what pleases him gives her great delight, I am sure.

At supper I had to go through one of Celeste's periodic fits because a couple of pilgrims tapped at her door during the afternoon. The people were charming and as they have lived in Natchez during the past 9 years, they could bring me up to date on a flock of points. Perhaps the most striking thing they had to tell was that during the past twelfth month, Rean has had the Ferriday Byrnes mansion living room embellished by a photographic mural of the Natchez trace. This, apparently, is a big year for murals. I must write the lady and ask her for a photograph of the item. The people are returning this way later in the season and I shall get some additional points about this decoration.

I learned that my old friend, Stewart Henry, the former Presbyterian minister in Natchez has gone to a post in South Carolina. I admired the man as being an ornament to my Church and so far as I know, he never had but one failing, so common in the Natchez country, --he simply couldn't write a letter.

On the political front, I view the present Talbot case with fascination. It demonstrates for the millionth time how stupid smart business men can be in political matters, for Talbot was certainly incredibly short sighted to try to drum up private business on official Air Force stationery. Off hand I should say the President could easily round up 2 million votes in his next or for his next campaign by expressing horror at the goings-on and relieving Talbot of his post with a letter filled with platitudes about the necessity of Cabinet officers being above suspicion regarding their business operations, which sounds funny enough with the whole Cabinet packed with millionaires, but it would be good political dope. Perhaps he will not need 2 million extra votes but if he doesn't do anything more than "study" the Senate report on the matter in question, he can probably win any way but with a less imposing majority. However he acts, if at all, I'll bet dollars to doughnuts he could bat Talbot for having been as stupid with his use of stationery as Wilson is with his talk about dogs which, among other things cost Ferguson his Senate seat in the last election. But I'm off the track and I must make tracks for my downy couch.....

7493

P.S.

today's post ran an hour ahead of schedule, - hence the presence of both Sunday and Monday memos in the same outgoing post.

Monday, August 1st, 1955.

Memorandum:

How nice to find the Botanical Garden message in today's post and how kind of you to stop everything to give me a glance at what is stirring. I pray you to make use of such messages from time to time for they reassure me as to your activities and make neat little sub-structures for the bridge of regular correspondence when circumstances are more favorable.

It is cloudy here tonight, with the radio promising us increased breezes up to 25 miles per hour during the night when rains from the hurricane, Brenda, will begin reaching us around midnight and continue throughout tomorrow unless said Brenda changes her course and moves violently in an easterly direction.

Carolyn telephoned tonight from New Orleans to say that the exterior pictures of the African House, taken last week, turned out perfectly but the interiors were a fizzle. I may have mentioned that one of the exteriors had Clemence in the foreground with a couple of sprays of purple crepe myrtles cutting across the picture, the African House in the back ground. Toss in a deep blue sky and a couple of white clouds, s, and you may readily imagine the effect.

Carolyn also reported spending two hours with Farley at the airport, when he changed planes, en route from New York to Los Angeles, via the luff and New Orleans. She said he looks wonderful, is delighted with his brother-in-law, and plans to get going on the Marie Therese volume early this coming year, after he has finished some script writing in Manhattan during the autumn. It appears that he returns to Los Angeles for a brief pause, after which he and Irma will drive East, perhaps within the month, stopping off at Melrose and New Orleans, and thence on to the Bluff where Irma will spend the winter with la Storm, and Farley will fly down to be with them from Manhattan, during the week ends. t all sounds so hunly-burly but I guess they like it.



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1955, August 2nd, Tuesday

It is amusing to report, according to the telephone conversation, that the man handling the publicity for former Governor Long during his last administration, has already approached the present author of the Governor Kennon movie scripts with an offer to do some elaborate films for the next Long administration. From that it would appear that the writer of said scripts ought to land on her feet which ever way the election goes, and everyone seems to think that Long will be re-elected. The dawn's early light today brought a carpenter and a gardener with plenty of piddling for each of them. I had the carpenter put in more window panes, rig up some odds and ends in the African House, put some shelves across the window here by my desk to hold figurines and pretty glass and replace some of the heavy shelving below surface level in that little old white hot house, hard by the side gate, some of the former shelves having gone into a great decline with the passage of the years and the presence of so much humidity always present there. I re-arranged a flock of empty earthen pots on the shelves and in big pots planted some seeds of the India Sugar Gourd. April, not August, is the time for gourd planting in Louisiana but I figure that in such a humid place, the gourds will get well established within 90 days, and will probably not be effected by frosts inside such a building. Thus the gourds will provide curtains of greenery throughout the winter in this sheltered nook and for all I know, a few big gourds may develop and flourish from vines clinging to the ceiling which ought to give a pleasantly tropical impression along about January or February. In passing I might remark that the 65 foot gourd of God, stretching along the front of the Yucca gallery, has now turned the corner on the end nearest the African House and will shortly extend along the entire east end of the house as well as across the front. At this moment, the sound of rain on the banana leaves reach me, proclaiming that the fringe of Brenda's aquatic draperies have reached this bend of the river. But the breeze is cooler, if damper, and what with a be-loved tall glass, charged with tender Leaf, I'm going to enjoy a moment's relaxation before calling it a day, made the happier by your thoughtful message.....

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Tuesday, August 2nd, 1955.

Memorandum:

Such a strange night and day, last past, what with the full moon, in spite of the clouds, making the night seem like dawn, and day, with an endless drizzle, but withal cool, making August seem like April. As for the planters, they say this is ideal for the boll weevil birth rate but for me it is wonderfully pleasant, what with pilgrims drowned out and vegetation responding to the moisture, so unique in mid summer.

I intended reporting as of Sunday last past that I had heard my first serenade of the Seven Year Locusts, fiddling for dear life on their oldest and best of violins, making a Cremona look and sound like a nickle in comparison, ---or contrast.

Brenda, the current hurricane, crept in without any fanfare of high winds and only the thunder of the rain on the broad, flat leaves of the Orinoco banana leaves to announce her advent, as reported in yesterday's memo. It's the mildest hurricane I can remember, what with no high winds accompanying the down pour.

The same postman who was an hour early on Monday morning was at least one hour late on his go-round today. This wasn't because of Brenda but merely because the Welfare and Old Age pension checks gummed up the mails today, requiring a stop at almost every mail box and therefore slowing down delivery to a snails pace.

According to tonight's weather report, New York and South Dakota are sweltering under a blast of about 100 degrees while the thermometer never got above 78 here today and tonight is of course lower. The grapevine reported a high old time in town yesterday when Dan had four workmen from here come to do some painting inside his house. Dan was well fortified, it is said, and Fuga bou with whom I had to contend last week on the question of drunkenness, was said to have continued that condition throughout the week end so that when he got down to work in town, paint went flying in every direction on walls, furniture and floors, and doubly provoking his employer, so definitely in the same state. I have heard it said whiskey doesn't mix well with gasoline and I gather the same may be said about paint.



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Today's post included a couple of air mails from The Bluff and one from the William Hugheses, --the latter a long time in coming, it would seem. But the several items remain in the armoire as the rain must have washed all the secretaries down the drain.

I don't seem to have much by way of reading material to hand but that will enable me to dip into "Seven Years in Tibet" by some gentleman whose ~~se~~ name, as pronounced, sounds like Heinrich Heimer which, perhaps will give a touch of the dreadful aspects of mountain trails in that remote situation, recalling the Lowell Thomas opus on the same subject. I welcomed today's opportunity to piddle about, as it affords me an opportunity to catch my breath following the recent weeks of physical activity.

I liked the Charles Collingwood summation of this year's session of Congress tonight and I thought the way he handled the matter of the difference in salaries paid the Chaplain of the Senate as opposed to that of the House distinctly on the hilarious side. --the Senate chaplain being voted a salary of five thousand, the House chaplain seven thousand four hundred dollars, it being explained that the House chaplain should receive more money because he has to pray for over four hundred members whereas the Senate chaplain has only 96 to worry God about.

J. H. came over along about 7:30, sheltered by a parasol. Tuesday night is gambling night and I gather there must be some strain as between Melrose and Alexandria since the purpose of his visit was to ask me to remove my telephone receiver about 8 o'clock.

As he had seen but two of the 9 mural sections, I thought the opportunity good to get him into the African House and did. He looked over the individual pictures with greater care than I ever saw him do with anything but lists of figures and he summed up his impressions by saying he thought the artist had done a real good job. He will never know that we have helped Clemence financially along the way and I'm hoping he will make her a present of a substantial check.....

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Wednesday, August 3rd, 1955.

Memorandum:

The rains stopped this noon, -- I hope, --after six and one half inches had fallen, so you may see readily enough that it was time for a slight change. At the change at best was but a promise, since the cloud coverage continues as before, but my guess is that old Brenda is about played out.

I thought I had got around to explored yesterday's post today but didn't really get too far. I couldn't get anywhere with Kay's handwritten letter which will have to be taken up later when a more experienced eye at such matters passes this way. As for Dora, I didn't get to in until after reading the one from the Hughes family and an interruption cut me off from finishing Dora's. The most impressive thing I encountered in the section I did digest was the slip from Katherine to Kay when referring to the wife, which seems new. La Storm comes in for her usual place of praise from Dora's pen. It seems they are casting about to find someone to occupy permanently the guest house and to serve as general over-seer of the estate, not so much, I take it from the point of doing anything but merely by being present. Dora says that "Aunt Willie had an opportunity to sell it but declined as she wishes to remain there most of the time". There's something out of whack in that line for, if my grapevine is functioning correctly, he Bluff was conveyed to Kay some time back by her aunt and therefore belongs to Dora's wife, although, from the sentence quoted above, I take it Dora doesn't know this as yet.

I had better begin sharpening up my wits a bit before I begin to get much further in my relations with Dora, for I certainly don't want to talk out of turn and yet at the same time, I find myself in a somewhat anomalous position in certain quarters, as, for example, whether I should make my reference to the visit



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to Melrose of his old friend, Mrs. Mahiers who is a close friend  
of his sister. Far be it from me to spill another person's apple-  
cart but I declare I must get his intentions as regards some  
of his former associates whom I met through him, straightened out  
in my mind. It would seem to me grossly unfair and cruel  
to leave them in a state of jitters, worrying as what dire  
circumstances he may be in and yet at the same time, it  
doesn't seem quite my place to tell them that he got his  
feet inside the door at Fort Knox. Sooner or later his kin folk  
in Natchez will be hearing something or other, either indirectly  
through me or some other agency and I wish he would settle the  
matter as to how he wants the news imparted and thereby  
give me a little more security in my wish to handle the  
information best.

It is my understanding that the General Motors gives its  
dinner for the car designers tonight and naturally I  
am holding the thought that my friend, Alton, may hit the jack  
pot with a scholarship. But whether he does or not, he will go  
to Los Angeles to college regardless, but it would be nice  
if he could enjoy the added advantage of the grand  
prize. I suppose I shouldn't have been surprised this morning when  
I waded to the post office amidst torrents of rain that had been  
falling all night, when I learned that the ladies across the  
fence had gone to Alexandria on a frolic. It's remarkable  
how neither hurricane nor high water can deter them from flying  
up and down the road. If Celeste ever broke a leg, I cannot  
imagine what sort of an anchor they could contrive to make  
her "stay-put".

It goes without saying that I thought of little  
Miss Lee of late when, on my way to the post office, I  
gazed through the downpour at the butterfly lilies,  
drenched and in bud form, as they tried to keep from  
drowning, the cascades of water from on high. I find  
it so pleasant to slip into an envelope the unfolded blossoms,  
by the morrow, from the looks of things, so many  
blusters of buds have been moving toward maturity during the  
rains that there should be scads of bunches from which  
to select a prize flower. Our thermometer remains in the 70's, and  
I'm holding the thought that some of the Manhattan heat may  
have lessened markedly. Do go slow these steaming times.....

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I'm having difficulty getting envelopes unstuck to get the  
letters inside so if said envelopes seem gummed up a bit, just  
charge it off against Brenda.

Thursday, August 4th, 1955.

Memorandum: How nice to find your Saturday and Monday letters in  
today's post. It was so thoughtful of you to give me such a  
delightful sketch of your Saturday surroundings and particulars  
about your little feathered companion. I love the name.  
The widow Kirkland, living in the house on the right just before  
one reaches the spillway, --a mulatto lady, is known to the whole  
neighborhood as Miss Sweetie and as she is the first person I ever  
bearing such a handle, I find in your friend the second in the  
same category and somehow its unusualness lends enchantment to  
each party bearing the same name.

It was so kind of you to think of me in regard to the  
Houston Chronicle article. I secured but a single copy which  
I forwarded, naturally, to little Miss Lee. Should you  
not need it and one other, I should be delighted to be able  
to send one to Dora and to Alonzo Landsford or to Mrs.  
Stirling, as the latter is much interested in the artist and I  
believe keeps a scrapbook on Cane River personalities.  
I was interested to learn about the change of residence on the  
part of the little ones. It just goes to show how things change  
on the Island for while I must say I was well acquainted with the  
former community where they dwelt, I never before heard of the  
new place in which they are situated.

It was so kind of you to take time to tell me something of  
the Library of Congress list you checked. The names of the  
people you mentioned were familiar and I should like to read  
everyone you jotted down. "The Dinner Party" sound particularly  
attractive and Laurette Taylor's biography should make  
entertaining reading if the biographer has been able to  
handle the relations between her and her son quite frankly.  
I used to see Miss Taylor occasionally and on one occasion she hono-



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with her confidence, --concerning a problem which probably never got into print before she or perhaps, before her son found himself without any power over her. Her producers always felt that for the character parts she played, she should always avoid any mention of age to disturb the minds of her audiences. And her son, learning of this, was forever trying to blackmail his mother, threatening to get into scrapes, such as stealing something or attacking somebody, whereupon he would be arrested and the tabloids would spread the details about Laurette Taylor having a son, a mature man. The way the son behaved the mother was outrageous and I always felt her greatest power as an actress was to maintain her "sweetness and light" presentations on the boards when inwardly she was all torn to pieces. It will be interesting to see if the biography has been able to handle any of this aspect of her stage career.

And thanks for sending me the clipping regarding "Facts Forum". Dr. Evans telephoned me today, saying that with graduation of the summer school taking place tonight, he and Mrs. Evans were planning a little vacation but hoped they might be permitted to make another little visit to Elrose before leaving. It is so nice to have this information provided by the clipping to discuss with him about his former connections, when he comes.

I got around to read Kay's letter today and although it is buried in a stack of stuff, induced by secretaries and house cleaning all the in the same breath, I shall enclose it. It is rather interesting in that it touches upon a subject which has set me to pondering about a little of late, --just how the impression got abroad in South Carolina that I was likely to make one, --possibly two trips to the Bluff this autumn. I suppose, as is my bad custom, that I may have tossed off the word "autumn" when in the Spring, invitations became rather pressing about a Spring visit, and the autumn seemed so far away. interruption.....had to call a doctor for "a lady what's studyin' about havin' a baby....."

I gather that when the marriage developed so unexpectedly, the thought on the part of several people was that I might really make a visit to the low country in the autumn. Apparently the idea grew in momentum as events developed and then the African trip came up for consideration and before long it was calculated that Carolyn would go to The Bluff to discuss final plans for the trip and that since she was going to do so prior to October, I might accompany her and then make

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another visit later in the autumn, to what point, I cannot imagine. On reading Kay's letter, I gathered that the consensus of opinion in South Carolina was that Carolyn and I were going to make a joint visit, -- a conclusion that somewhat surprised me doubly, since I hadn't made a point from the late winter half promise about some vague future time for a visit, while Kay, who has seen Carolyn recently in New Orleans, might well have understood, even as I do, that Carolyn's present job, being turned out under some pressure, will carry her around the grindstone slap through January.

In view of these circumstances, I was a little taken aback today when a telephone came through from Charleston, --note that it was not Moncks Corner, and the same familiar voice was on the wire, --the same voice which had put me in a mild panic late in May or early in June, when inquiry was made concerning relative, if any, of the prospective groom. I gathered that the conversation today was not made in the presence of "the children", and I was asked about coming over for a little visit with Carolyn in October. I said quite frankly that I was under the impression Carolyn planned no trip before the turn of the year and that so far as I was concerned, and this was equally true, I had no notion as to just when the publicity covering the murals was going to break and that it was imperative that I be here immediately following that date.

From a letter from The Bluff, or possibly from Carolyn's telephone conversation, following her conference with Farley, I was given to understand that Farley and Irma are driving to The Bluff early in October so obviously the lady at The Bluff will not be alone. Frankly, I haven't the slightest intention of going to The Bluff for a whole flock of reasons, not the least of which is the fact that when I do, if I ever do, I certainly prefer to make my go-round at a time when there aren't a flock of other people there. Perhaps that particular clan is like Blythe Rand who honestly believes that anybody would prefer to be with a flock of people rather than with just one, or, as in Blythe's case, that one couldn't possibly get through a dinner with merely the members of the immediate household being present.

I apologize for rattling along at such a great rate on this subject which certainly isn't worth it, but by so doing, I may make a little clearer my own position in regard to The Bluff and at the same time demonstrate how slightly confused I am by the communications that seem to suggest that either one trip or even



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two trips in that direction are contemplated. I giggle in my  
heard every time I think that anybody could suppose that  
I, who seldom go out the front gate, would suddenly so forget  
myself as to plan not one but two jaunts to the east coast  
within a single season. It would seem that much of this strange  
concept must stem from the wish on the part of la Storm, and perhaps  
the children, and I can readily envision rough weather ahead for  
I haven't the slightest doubt that when the establishment at  
630 St. Anne's Street is established in New Orleans, there  
will be some pulling and hauling at me to run down to the Crescent  
City for a round of gaiety in the big city, and I'm not studying  
about going anywhere.

Well, so much for the current hurly-burly and let's get  
back to your letter and your thoughtfulness in advising me  
about the condition of this ribbon. I am so glad you  
let me know how it tracks, for I shall take especial  
pains to strike the type with particular care when making  
all envelopes as between now and the time a new ribbon is  
successfully achieved.

I was so struck by something you said in your letter about which  
I had never given thought before, --the possible enjoyment my  
letters had provided Madam Marco. And what impressed me about your  
observation was that in the same post came a pitiful letter, which  
I also hope I can find and enclose, expressing the same thought  
which you had penned. Frankly, I was surprised. I must  
get a letter off to Madam Marco tonight, for the poor thing  
obviously needs all the moral support she can get these trying  
days while Susie is dying.

I am not surprised that I never heard from Mrs. Moore when I  
wrote her in April or May, suggesting she and I undertake to  
organize a couple of projects for the solving of some of the Atlanta  
problems, --for Mrs. Moore, as you know, never writes, --except  
a book at the end of the year. When I wrote her at the time of  
her birthday on June 28th, I mentioned an earlier letter to  
her and told her I would appreciate any news she might pass along  
from Atlanta should she get it direct by a personal visit or by  
hearsay. I am holding the thought that she may come through  
with something shortly but in the mean time, I shall try to  
keep my own letters going to Atlanta in a tone that will,  
I hope, give a dab of pleasure to the poor lady in that quarter.  
Forgive the length of this epistle. I promise I shall have greater  
consideration in the future but your letters of Saturday and Monday were  
so delectable, I couldn't resist a double chat tonight.....

1024

7503

Friday, August 5th, 1955.

Memorandum:

You would laugh if you could see my bed, for it certainly  
looks like a mare's nest. I got the balance of the shelves  
put up at the window here by my desk today, --five in all,  
and each shelf cutting across where the window panes meet.  
Then they were all painted white, after the last ones were  
put into place and I had removed all the odds and ends which  
had been gracing those already in place prior to the painting  
job. And these objects I placed on my bed in the same order  
in which they appear on the five shelves and the net result  
looks like something out of Bedlam. But eventually I shall  
place the things on the floor in the same order as they will  
go back into their window positions on the morrow and then  
things will be in order until the next time I think up  
something when a carpenter, having nothing else to do, finds  
himself sent to me to finish out his day.

I had an idea this morning, --and if you feel like sitting  
down before ever reading about any idea that may come  
to my mind, you might do so. In view of the letters from  
The Bluff of late, the thought occurred to me that I perhaps  
had a candidate for the place if it could be arranged to have  
a certain Foreign Office transfer its Ambassador from Burma to  
The Bluff, and I wrote and asked all hands at the Bluff if  
said person would, in their opinion, be acceptable, citing  
as his qualifications and he plays Chopin divinely, is a  
licensed pilot and writes beautifully, --for print, if not  
in letters. I further explained that as he and I had waded the  
waterless canals of deep summer at Cypress Gardens, next door to  
The Bluff, it must be admitted that he is not entirely  
unfamiliar with the neighborhood. Something tells me  
their responses, all three, will be in the affirmative.

Of course there only remains the slight matter of  
selling the idea to the Ambassador, but I am under the  
impression that it's about time for him to retire, if he  
cares to do so, and as he has always loved the low country,  
I cannot imagine a more happy circumstances that the offer I am  
about to make to him. At this moment it occurs to me



7504

that there is something extremely odd about the fact that the person who can hand one friend a millionaire wife and another friend a baronial estate never himself seems to be two jumps ahead of the poor house. Would you think it might be a good idea to introduce a percentage point in such outlandish transactions or merely go on having strange ideas that really don't seem to harm anybody, and apparently does the guy with the ideas no particular good. Well, a yho, the idea struck me this morning and I wrote the belles at the Bluff accordingly and we shall see what we shall see. One thing is certain, nobody could ever keep the candidate from flying from thither to you and back again but as I contemplate that impulse in his nature, that seems to be all to the good, too, since he certainly would find a ready companion in all his jaunts in the lady who sits on the top of the heap, and, if he should decide Africa might be nice to explore, or South America, or Europe, or South America, or North America, he would certainly provide a guide in himself, quite familiar with all such places.

John Kyser telephoned me, or his office did this morning, asking if I would receive him and the President of the Louisiana State Board of Education, Dr. Joseph Davies. I would. And so they came and we had a pleasant go-round and I liked Dr. Davies and he liked my port and so everything turned out nicely.

The Hatchitoches Society for the Preservation of Historic Sites, or some such pen erously title organization telephoned me this afternoon to give them the appropriate wording for some post cards they are going to have made of the Lemee House and other structures they are engaged on concentrating their efforts on. Isn't it strange that such a Society has to consult somebody who doesn't live in the town and isn't a member of the organization to give them particulars regarding the very stuff on which they are working. The President of the organization, in expressing her thanks to me for my work, promised to compensate me by sending me the first card of the series, if and when, the thing is ever put through. Those ladies is sights, to quote an ancient plantation mistress of mutual acquaintance.

And so cometh another week end and may yours be a transcript of the one immediately before.....

7505

Sunday, August 7th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Two whole days without rain which really seems remarkable, and, it goes without saying, the planters are delighted.

And the people passing this way were as sunny as the weather, with but a single cloud on the horizon to rumble and groan like a thunder head low on the horizon of the evening sky.

Celeste has succeeded in creating a persecution complex for herself and this leads to considerable unpleasantness. This afternoon it reached its peak when some R. E. A. people passed this way, having been told by J. H. some time back that I would be glad to show them the place. They had the misfortune to stop next door to inquire for me, never having been in this area before, and, brother, did they catch it. The man who went to ask for me was given a 45 minute lecture on the outrageousness of people who barge in on other people's afternoons, there was much data about how she had had to wash dishes after dinner this day because her servant wasn't here and how she just couldn't stand it any longer to have anyone disturb her when she wanted to write a letter, etc., etc., etc. And because she is J. H.'s wife, the man, of course, would take it, but when we got beyond the fence, he asked me if the lady was seriously ill, as he rubbed his head.

At supper, Celeste began the whole thing over again, apparently having the greatest pleasure in dramatizing the terrible life she has to lead, how I am making her the goat of all passing pilgrims since instead of coming directly to me --she didn't say through the gate marked "No Admittance", - they go to her and she is worn out and can't stand it any longer and is going to leave, etc., etc.

The thing is beginning to get tiresome and as she develops more and more pity for herself because she can never have any peace or do anything she wants to do, the matter of Sunday afternoons is becoming a mania with her and she appears to have successfully divested herself of about all of her friends. In the latter category, I am as through with her as a dead man with the world, although I shall, of course, for J. H.'s sake, continue my accustomed relations with her, but with an altogether hollow heart.



7506

I apologize for reciting such tiresome circumstances, but I feel certain you prefer to know which way the wind blows and it may even be interesting to observe from time to time on how many fronts the battle for the preservation of Melrose has to be fought, for, as she herself declares, the place means nothing to her and is only a source of seat and annoyance so far as she is concerned. One must be charitable toward old hens and complain not if God apportioned them but a chicken's brain, but Lord, what a pity, when such a biddie can masquerade as a grown woman and have the influence to effect so many things adversely.

The vegetation continues manifesting the most vigorous response to our recent rains. The view of the Phillipine lilies is particularly lovely when seen from inside the Chapel, as one looks at them through the stained glass. Some of the stalks are 8 or 10 feet in height and are crowned by a diadem of trumpet shaped flowers that look like large Easter lilies and are really lovely. Fortunately, some of the stalks are not more than 3 or 4 feet in height and accordingly come about on a level with the eye when one is seated in a pew.

I don't recall exactly when I planted the sugar gourds in pots which I placed in the little hot house by the side gate but it seems to me it wasn't more than a week or 10 days ago. Be that as it may, they have all sprouted and are up about 3 or 4 inches, so I reckon the vines, growing at such a rate, should have the interior of the little building pretty well covered within a month and perhaps gourds will be hanging like pendants from the glass ceiling long before the first November frost converts the out of door vines from green to brown.

Saturday's post wasn't much, as indicated by the enclosures. But it was nice of Father Roble to remember me while vacationing in Florida, and I got a kick out of the name of the garden club whose secretary wrote me for a tour to which I responded with a negative answer. What with Colfax being hill billy, I think the members of the club would be happier observing flora in some other setting but I still think the Colfax Blossom Garden Club among the funnier titles I have run across.

I was able to keep awake on Saturday night for a while and took the opportunity to read a little from John Galsworth's first volume of the Forsythe Saga, which first appeared in 1906, I believe. I liked the series when first I read it in the 20's and find I like re-reading it even better. Do hope you get a chance to crack a book or some such this week end, too.....

7507

Monday, August 8th, 1955.

Memorandum:

I suppose at least one other memo will come to hand at the same time this one does, for Sunday night's chat failed to make the out-going post this morning, what with the postman running another time at one and a half hours earlier than is customary.

And so, instead of dropping the envelopes in the box, I brought them home with me and so will have a double dip to be sent forward on the morrow, --assuming I get to the office before Herr Cardineau flies in and out.

The lady across the fence, blowing cold and hot, sour and sweet as between Sunday night and Monday morning, would have offered to post the mail for me, as she was heading out for Lafayette or Ville Plate or some such place for a day's frolic right after coffee but I prefer to have my mail go through the regular channels. I suppose it is characteristic of the human race for women, as a rule, to treat all men as they do their husbands whereas the husbands usually treat other women different from the way they do their wives. Be that as it may, Celeste apparently thinks she can get the same reaction out of me that she gets out of J. H., by using the alternating cold-hot method, but somehow it just doesn't seem to work on this mule and I'm hoping her stupidity is sufficiently great not to notice that the usual exterior of my relations with her screens a fabric of regard that is beyond any hope of repair so far as she is concerned.

On the nicer side of life, little old Grandpa brought down the four kittens she had given birth to, in the attic of Yuoca about 6 weeks or so back. I didn't see them make the descent by way of the supportin pillar of the gallery which she negotiates with such verve, but I assume she probably carried them down, although they are getting pretty big and she really must have had a mouthful. Did I mention that there were four in all. They are still a little shy in this great, big, imponderable world and it was only at 6 o'clock that they arrived but three of them, possessed of the curiosity usually ascribed to a cat, are obviously sitting on the step



7508

for I can see three pairs of shining bright eyes reflecting the light of my desk lamp as they gaze in wonder at what they see and perhaps hear, although they may have heard the sound of the typewriter since the day they were born for the vibration probably carries into the attic easily enough. There seem to be a couple of gray ones, one black one and the fourth I haven't seen at all, but I know there is a fourth since I could hear him calling to his mother from above when I was giving her her supper and the other three were already fiddling around in the banana trees.

It was nice hearing again from Mrs. Mahier again by today's post. I couldn't quite make out just when it was she was "studying about" going to Natchez but assume it may have been sometime just after posting my letter on the 4th, planning to get back on the 15th to her Baton Rouge home. I don't know Frances Mahier Brandon's (Mrs. James Brandon's) Natchez address and so I am simply sending my letter to Baton Rouge for it will contain no startling news concerning the newly weds.

We had another shower this afternoon but it didn't amount to much except to cool the air a little. I was working in the cellar section of the little green house by the side gate where the thermometer stood at about 110 with the humidity over the saturation point, I am sure. I decided to plant some pumpkin seeds in an old tub, five feet below the level at which the gourds are planted, thinking that if either or both types of vines thrived and produced, the vegetables might look pretty suspended from the ceiling on their own green vines at the holiday season. The wind accompanying the rain cloud must have dropped the temperature from about 95 to 75 and as it was much warmer where I had been working, stepping out into the open was like being catapulted from the equator to the polar ice cap in the twinkling of an eye.

I continue hearing nothing from the Segleaus, meaning, I suppose, that the baby is a novelty still and that both papa and mama have better things to play with at night than a typewriter, and for all I know, quite aside from bouncing the baby, they also may be walking the floor with the little girl, too, but I hope not for their sakes.

Pat invited Eugene to fly up to Kansas City with him on Saturday or Sunday to see a ball game but Eugene declined, and all I want to see from the air is Cane River, not the Mississippi

0127

7509

uesday, August 9th, 1955.

Memorandum:

A humid, hot day without rain, even as it was in Charleston, "according to my informants", although this evening clouds from Connie apparently began spreading in the direction of The Bluff although the center of the storm was apparently moving northward several hundred miles to the east of that bend in the Cooper.

And how I got the news from The Bluff was by telephone. The lady herself called me along about dusk-dark, saying they all were worried because they hadn't heard from me last week. It's lucky I don't worry about them when a week goes along without a line.

And the Children talked with me, too, both of them obviously impatient to get started for New Orleans this week end. One of the oddities of Dora is the way he has always stuck to an ultra American pronunciation of the Crescent City, making it sound as though spelled New Orleans, instead of the Franco-American-Negro twist of the old South, like New Orleans, with the accent on the "Or" part and not on the "eenes" part, as la veiz de Pipes has it.

Everything seemed rosey on The Bluff but with three people all having a go at it, not much worth reporting was exchanged from either quarter.

I didn't see the ladies across the fence today as they went to town before the coffee hour but this afternoon I received some of Celeste's friends from New Iberia for a tour and Madam Regard gave them coffee afterwards. Celeste couldn't be home to receive them as, so her friend, Mrs. Landry of New Iberia confided to me, Celeste had to go somewhere to make sandwiches for some party being planned for the morrow. I learned the two ladies will drive to New Iberia on Sunday, -- Celeste and Madam Regard and so that will give me at least one peaceful afternoon.



7510

I was disappointed today when a lady telephoned me from Shreveport, asking if I could put fifteen plates, all of the African House design, in the post tomorrow morning, for I am entirely out of that particular design at the moment and delivery will not be made of the new shipment until Labor Day. What anybody wanted of such a number of plates of that particular design, I cannot imagine but as the woman is big oil, I suppose she merely had a whim to send that particular design to some of her friends.

A letter from Helen Hughes which I didn't finish reading, asks if her husband and she may come up and take pictures in color and in black and white of the murals. They mention a Sunday as being a likely time. It seems strange that they who have been here on a Sunday should hit on that particular day of the week.

I took a little time out last night to read a few more pages from the John Galsworthy opus, "Man of Property", being the first in the Forth saga series. I had forgotten how excellent it really is and I'm hoping to get an opportunity to have a further go at the same thing tonight eventually.

I suppose Galsworthy, in a way, was to English literature what his contemporary, Romain Rolland was to French, although Galsworthy reminds me more of "little Marcel" in the excellence with which he can paint personal portraits in miniature with such telling effect. For the average reader, it must be much easier to keep up with the characters in Rolland's opus which were less numerous and perhaps not quite so finely sketched. I have often felt that for invalids who cannot get about but who like to read, it would be wonderful to think that one could spend six months of each year reading the Forth business and another six months reading "The attempt to re-capture the past", and thus have all the years of one's life well filled with the infinite pleasure of re-reading these two pieces year in and year out.

But now for an attack on the morrow's mail and so to a round on the reading machine and thence to dreams.....

7511

Wednesday, August 10th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Deep summer in a Louisiana sort of way, what with cloudless skies, much heat and humidity, and no end of people running the roads in the white sections and colored people talking about the first cotton boll that he or she has discovered in this or that cotton patch. Ten days hence, probably, and the road runners will still be road running and these colored people of today who are talking about cotton's potentials will be clasping the snowy bolls in their dusky hands.

In the mean time, plantation workers, momentarily unemployed in the fields, are sent to me from the store by J. H. who can't think of anything for them to do until cotton picking begins, after which I shall see nobody, probably, until after the turn of the year, and so I make the most of whatever comes to hand. Before 5 this morning, two or three air planes were zooming low over cotton fields and gardens, dishing out a killing breakfast for the boll weevils and shortly afterwards, Mark Rogers was busy fashioning wheel barrow handles for a couple of Melrose items which the plantation is forever borrowing and breaking. Murphy was busy, trying to fill up an endlessly bottomed pit where careless well drillers had dug mighty holes in the ground, midway between the big house and the African House and then had gone away and left as they had finished drilling, holes perhaps 30 feet in depth and a foot in circumference where, by some miracle, nobody had broken a leg during the past couple of weeks. Andy was gardening, McKinley was trimming broken limbs from the last big wind and a couple of strong armed field hands were toting away trash that had accumulated in the wood lot during the past month of varied activities about the place. And so the day got under way and by 9 o'clock I had arrived at the Post Office where Celeste darling-ed me with a froth of affection which, had it been, as it almost seemed, as endless as the Milky Way, would have in no way tended to eradicate her ridiculous unreasonable childishness, as of Sunday last past.



7512

The artist was at the Post Office. She said she wanted me to h  
her later. Zelma was there, too, looking wonderful as an  
Aunt Jemima, a soft yellow and purple plaid dress, covered in part  
by a white apron, and above her delicious chocolate skin, a  
sort of new fangled tignon of yellow that was splendid.  
She said she felt wonderful and was expectant to return to  
the hospital for her operation about the 22nd.

After coffee across the fence, I returned to Yucca and  
the workers who always seem to do about twice as much when they  
experience the "inspiration" of anyone's presence, and  
Clemence was on the gallery. She said she had received  
a letter from Texas and wanted me to help her get two boards  
of a given, rather small size, so that she could paint and  
revival and a baptisin' to fill the order she had received.  
I asked her from which city in Texas came the letter. She  
seemed a little surprised that I had never heard of Texas, for  
Texas to her is the name of a place like Houston or Dallas, and  
Heaven alone knows how any message written to her, gets through and  
how, if ever, she ever gets a response written, --and addressed.  
The size she required for boards was noted by twostings, knotted  
at the ends, to afford me the precise measurements and, by good  
fortune, with a dab of sawing, I could fill her wants to a T.

Three pecane experts came to dinner, Drs. Smith Pierce and Harr  
and after dinner came pilgrims and so the day played out.

At supper I learned that Dan is in the hospital having a check-  
This is a periodic business which somehow seems a little useless,  
after one go-round, since is inclination to be drunk a great dal  
of the time seems most likely to produce the physical  
condition which invariably seems to call for another check-up  
to discover why he isn't feeling quite up to par. And if,  
when reading this, it doesn't seem to make much sense, I  
don't mind saying it doesn't seem to make much to me as I  
write. Tonight's radio talked about Hurricane Connie waving away  
to the west in the direction of the Carolinas. I am glad  
the children are at The Bluff so that the lady there may have  
the comfort of associates if things get to sailing pretty high in  
that neighborhood. Do hope you batten down your own blinds for the

7513

Thursday, August 11th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Today's weather has been a transcript of yesterday's, --hot  
and humid and cloudless, but of a heat that didn't get above  
92 which, it is said, is perfect for cotton which doesn't begin  
suffering from heat until after the thermometer reaches 94, although  
I assume that figure may be modified, depending upon the amount  
of dryness or humidity obtaining.

Celeste appealed to me for aid and comfort today in all aspects  
of the tour which the associated women's clubs of Hatchitoches  
are putting on this autumn, --visits to ante bellum home, with  
a view to getting enough money to do some furnishing of the old  
Lemee House. I am glad to give her whatever advise she asks for,  
but I volunteer nothing, as for example, that she should have already  
decided on the date of the tour which, as Chairman of the business,  
she "thinks" she will determine early next month. Of course  
that isn't going to give her any time to get out the pamphlets  
that are to be printed, but she can eventually find that  
out for herself, although, of course, there's no point in getting  
pamphlets printed until you have the date of the tour decided upon, since  
that will be one of the imperative bits of data for the pamphlet.  
Her affability is beyond measure, so far as I am concerned, and it  
cuts not a bit of ice although she doesn't know it.

Then, too, she's all gummed up in the matter of feeding  
the pilgrims, as she envisions doing just that at the Lemee House,  
which is a small house, perhaps half the size of Yucca, and feeding  
dozens of people there would be impossible and probably there will  
be hundreds and that gesture is going to end in a fiasco, I am quite  
sure. Of course what should be done is to make arrangements on  
a percentage basis with some nice restaurant, but I am sticking  
to my own knitting and am lending a hand only when asked to do so.

Horace Rand came to see me this afternoon, bringing a Mr. Howard  
of Alexandria with him. They have been spending a few days at the camp  
and invited me over for the evening but of course I declined.  
But we had a pleasant chat here and I learned something about a  
pear tree I didn't know before. Horace told me that on his property  
in Alexandria a pear has flourish for years but never produced  
a single, solitary dab of fruit. But this year, following the March 27th



8127

7514

freeze, somebody told him that if he would drive a good sized nail into the trunk of the tree, it would bring forth fruit. He March 27th freeze and knocked the newly formed fruit from all the pear trees of his friends in Alexandria, even as it did here. But as Horace's had had not fruit, he thought it wouldn't matter much either way if he drove or did not drive a big nail in the tree. And so he hammered one in and Lo! the tree began putting on fruit for the first time in its career, so that he is the only one in his neighborhood having pears, and such an abundance of them that they are breaking down the branches.

Astonished by this unexpected and seemingly inexplicable phenomenon he consulted a horticulturalist, Stokes, from whose nursery came most of the local Chinese magnolias. Mr. Stokes said he had never heard about using a nail on a pear tree but occasionally in times past, he had had a tree that didn't bear and he had whacked the trunk with an axe, and following the cutting of this gash in the thing, the tree would begin to produce. His explanation for the miracle ran something like this:

Through some twist in the tree's make up, it had somehow lacked sufficient impulse to bring forth fruit and after a few seasons, became confirmed in its non-productive tendency. Then, when shocked by the blow of the axe, the tree instinctively made an unusual effort to reproduce its kind, the effort resulting in success and the initial success becoming a permanent custom in the years that followed. I told Andy about this and he said that he had an old pear tree that had never born and that he had started to cut it down but, for what reason he couldn't say, he decided to leave the trunk and one single branch and that this year, with not a pear on Cane River, he has several dozen on a branch which he had spared.

I fear this wouldn't work on pecan trees but if J. H. knew about the pear business, he might feel inclined to try.

Celeste's nephew, Joe Regard, is here and Celeste is giving a stag party for a dozen or so of Joe's friends in the Natchitoches neighborhood. But I'm not sure a stag party is one in which a dozen young men plus Cel is present, although she ought to have a whale of a time, whether the youths do or not. I heard today that Dr. Saucier of the college, sent her a congratulatory message on the birth of an heir the other day. That must have been a surprise to the recipient and a laugh to those who heard about it, although she never told anyone except her most intimate friend who heralded it far and wide. So things turn and so I turn to Tender Leaf in nicetall glass, and love it.....

8127

7515

Friday, August 12th, 1955.

Memorandum:

According to Charles Collingwood tonight, you all got a deluge equal to or exceeding our recent one of something over six inches. In the country at such times, things, of course, merely get awfully soupy but in great urban centers, things must get positively mill pond-ish. I am thinking about the probable difficulties this has placed upon you and I can readily imagine it presages a week end that will not be too promising for activities in the great out-of-doors.

Locally it rained during the night in Alexandria and Shreveport to the tune of a couple of inches but we didn't get a drop. Today, even as yesterday, continued humid and hot, but not too unpleasant.

I just discover I seem to have started off this memo with a real Denholme margin, due in part, perhaps, to the fact that I have been adjusting this machine to write some stickers bearing addresses. I may have mentioned the other day that a Shreveport lady ordered a flock of African House plates of which I had none. But as I started to drop my expression of regret in the post office, Lo! a letter came unexpectedly from Rock Hall, saying that the shipment of African House plates, bearing the new notation concerning the Hunter murals, had been shipped on the 5th. I have accordingly withdrawn my letter of regret and gone to work on the addresses so that these will be in order when the plates arrive, and hence the change of spacing on this machine.

When Carolyn telephoned last week or whenever, I gathered she was "studying about" going to Marshall this week end and passing this way en route from the Crescent City to the Texas town. Perhaps she got tangled up in Baton Rouge with the movie people or some such.

Be that as it may, the lost movie man, scheduled to take pictures



7516

the farm to market road, being the one from Melrose to Bermuda, passed this way, unannounced, today. I had been busy with Murphy at gardening but had sent the latter to the store to get us a couple of ice cold cokes. He returned to Yucca just as a secretary arrived, and I told Murphy to wait while the secretary gave me some addresses for the plates. While we were in the midst of that business, the Wenk boy thumped on my door, bringing me the movie man. I asked the latter to wait for me on the gallery and he waited. As soon as I had finished with the secretary, I contacted said camera man. He said he was so thirsty. I told Murphy to give the man my coke. But the camera man said he didn't care much about cokes and would rather have a glass of cold water. A new generator was being installed someplace on the river and there was no electric power, which is just another way of saying there was no running water. But I was able to melt down some ice from the ice box and so squeezed out a glass of water. The gentleman is from Cleveland, Ohio, and said he was interested in the South. To get the ice converted into liquid form, I had taken the man from Yucca, out of the side gate where he had glanced at the African House in passing, and, after having his glass of water at the big house, had told me much about France during the war, etc., asked me if there were any interesting old buildings on the place. I told them there were but not much more arresting than those he had seen which, as he would agree, weren't much. And thus I got him to talking some more about the war and before he knew it, he was out of the front gate and I could get on with my business, --and my slightly warmed coke.

Tomorrow he returns to take a morning shot of the big house for the film but as the other buildings are of no consequence, he is quite satisfied to concentrate on Melrose, that is to say the 1833 house, which is just what I wanted, since I want to save the African buildings for other, non-State films.

Dad was here for dinner and supper and appears to be as usual. At coffee this morning, Celeste allowed as how the stag party was an enormous success which in no way surprised me. And so another week end begins and may Connie be on her way and may Manhattan be getting dried up forthwith.....

7517

Sunday, August 14th, 1955.

Memorandum: I have already made the envelope for this memo and so in the event that everything suddenly goes blank, a fragment of a communication can go forward regardless and you will know that it is merely a mechanical failure of the machine and not a personal collapse that occasions the void.

It was so nice to find the package from Lyme in yesterday's post. And how like you to have contrived the ribbon in such a fashion that it could be so readily adjusted to this machine. Surely little Miss Lee did everything by way of anticipation to guarantee the success of the engineering operation and it is evident that thus far the new instrument is working perfectly.

And how nice to find the carton of little penguins in the same package, the whole business having come through so neatly, with not a penguin feather bent or roughed up. Oddly enough my own "weed" had fallen on the floor and remained there in a little puddle of water rendering them distinctly out of whack so that the time element for the advent of said penguins could not have been more perfect, what with the store closed for the week end and the opportunity to fortify myself except from borrowing from across the fence, well nigh impossible, so you may well believe the gift package could not have arrived more opportunely.

As for the week end, the weather was pleasant and I found myself trying to find particulars about your baptism of Friday when such a big dish pan of water inundated your area. Somehow I missed all references to atmospheric conditions and so I assume that somebody turned off the faucet although I am sure that the water was not going to the land.



7518

assume Saturday and Sunday must have been busy times,  
sepping up what hadn't run off.

I seem to be having Denheime marginal troubles again.

Carelyn eventually arrived and we were able to run through the newspaper articles, taking out paragraphs and sentences from one script and inserting it in others, so that each one would have its appeal to a particular locality. Then, too, one must slant these for papers like Shreveport and Houston in quite a different light than those for other sections, since the comparatively recent articles in these papers, stressing the personality of the artist would prevent them from getting past the Editor's desk unless the artist part were kept at a minimum and the building in which the murals are housed be stressed, etc., ect. Then, too, having learned from Bob in May that Mr. Ogden of the Times Picayune was stumped by primitives, all references to that form of Art had to be weeded out and the emphasis placed on geographic and architectural aspects of the story, rather than the personality of the artist. ut we worked concentratedly and got the job well in hand before taking some more black and white shots to go with the scripts, before Carelyn went on her way. I was a little tired when the job was finished but one rests so well after one realizes that an undertaking has been accomplished with comparative satisfaction.

The enclosures speak for themselves and don't have much to say. I wrote the Knabb-Lane Studio, giving them an intimation that it would be well for me to have some notation as to the cost of an 8 by 4 foot panel because I was aware they had made a photographic mural for Rean and I was curious to learn what figure nine panels of that size of a photographic nature would cost, what with Clemence a vint turned out nine in paint. At two hundred dollars per panel, were the local artist paid at that rate, little Miss Hunter would certainly be in the clear sailing section.

We were six at dinner today across the fence, Celeste, J. H., Regard, John Wenk, Pat and I. Pat said that in spite of air plane searching and checking at all air fields, the Hatchiteches candidate for Sheriff, Collins, who had taken off at midnight in his plane on Wednesday, had not been heard from. Celeste announced she was going on a vacation, the 25th, 26th and 27th, had been invited to spend three days with the General's wife in Baton Rouge. She said she certainly thought she deserved a vacation. She said she was going to give some time to the fall tour of the Cane River on her return. She had better, I should think. And so the week end runs out and thanks to little Miss Lee, mine has been a happy one, so wonderfully fortified ribbons and weeds.....

0527

7519

Monday, August 15th, 1955.

Memorandum:  
With August have gone, I pause to catch my breath and inquire where summer has fled, and the question seems especially pertinent, what with thermometer readings "hovering" around 69 these mornings and the days, although hot, yet not oppressively so, what with the promise of pleasant temperatures by the time first dark arrives. It is the mildest summer I can recall and already that indefinable something is in the air which, although one cannot put his finger on it, is a sure sign that the flood time of summer is over and that, in spite of occasional scorching days yet ahead, the heat blasts can never again be very enervating, what with the promise of cool spells in between the slabs of hot days between the cooler nights.

When I passed by to have coffee with Celeste and Madam Regard yesterday morning, I found the former stretched out on the swing on the gallery. In a whimpering voice, she pointed to her chest, explaining that while in the kitchen, she had had such a sudden sharp pain there and that her Mother hadn't given her the slightest sympathy but her servant had helped her to get flattened out on the gallery. Her voice now and then tended to break in a somewhat theatrical fashion. She gathered up more energy, however, as she went on to explain that she has no privacy and no leisure. She reached an even higher pitch when, after explaining that she simply had to have a new heating system installed, throwing out the fireplaces and butaine heaters and introducing wall panel methods as are possessed by some of her friends. What brought forth another gush of tears was the recitation about a Sunday night conversation she had had with J. H. regarding all these prime necessities, for he had told her that anything she wanted to have done would be perfectly alright. She explained that this agreement with her is so maddening because it isn't so much that she wants having the house done over as having him discuss the individual innovations. What is merely paying the bills when one could have so much more fun thinking up new ways to rig up a house that seems to get a rigging every season in some unimaginable way. You can easily see how cruel life is when your 84 year old mother refuses to get nervous about you and your husband is so disagreeable as to tell you that anything you want to have done is perfectly alright and to go ahead with anything desired.



7520

As for my own day, it was a little busy and so I found scant opportunity to feel sorry for my plight. Gardeners and carpenters arrived before sun-up and trying to anticipate my need for their services during the balance of the year when they will be lost in the cotton patch, I got the day going with a buzz. Then there were pilgrims and one or two visitors, one young lady from Monroe who had come down unannounced with a view to consulting with me about an aspect of folk music she wanted to explore, prior to heading out to study for her doctor's degree at Columbia, etc., etc.

I am inclined to be a little sleepy tonight but I may get around to read a page or two before calling it a day. At the moment I seem to have nothing of particular interest and I shall explore General Dean's Story a little further although my opinion of General Dean, never too rosey, doesn't seem to grow more so as I read his story. It's odd how I get the impression from his story that if we really had to be denied the services of a General in Korea, Dean was the man with whom we could best have parted.

Tonight's news casts speak of Diane as heading slap in the direction of the South Carolina shore and naturally my thoughts turn in that direction. I am hoping the children remained at the bluff until after the present go-round had played out. It would be so nice to know that the lady isn't there by herself and, for the life of me, I cannot think of anything that should supply an excuse for the children rushing off to New Orleans in a tearing hurry, for, so far as I know, they have plans to do nothing in particular when they arrive except to explore the Crescent City further and the hinterland.

The search goes on in this area for the Collins man of Hatchiteches who got into his plane at midnight on Thursday and hasn't been seen since. They had a flock of planes scouring the country within a radius of 180 miles over the week end but nobody could discover anything resembling a battered machine. J. H. said he saw the man about the time he took off and was under the impression the man had had a few sports. Of course he may have set down his plane at some fair port in the region to re-fuel and flown further than the 180 miles which was all he could have covered with the gasoline in his machine when he quitted the local port. Somehow it seems to be so difficult for people to drop out of sight completely but this Mr. Collins seems to have achieved. But now to the mail and thence to a dab of reading, a puff on a Keel and so to bed as against another busy day.....

7521

Tuesday, August 16th, 1955.

Memorandum: Another day, the precise re-print of yesterday and the promise of a low of 68 tonight which means sleeping ought to be pleasant enough...

The African House plates, shipped on the 5th, haven't arrived as yet, making me wonder if Connie held up transportation of so-called "Fast Freight" from off Jersey way. Tonight the radio continues talking about Diane approaching the Carolina coast but I can't yet figure out at which spot she will hit but I assume it will be North of The Bluff, I hope.

I coffeed at 9 across the fence and the younger lady seemed fine but the older one, although gay of spirit, too, had arms that were shaking so badly that she found difficulty, I gathered, in not spilling her orange juice. These days must be particularly trying for her, poor thing.

I took time out to examine the gourd situation rather carefully today. The only places where fruit has formed is where the blossoms have been almost smothered by the leaves. There were a few instances where the flowers formed gourds before the dusting of the cotton began, but every flower that unfolded after the dusting began, brought forth nothing and the same was true with the pumpkins, tomatoes, etc. I suppose dusting will be about finished for this season by this week end and as the gourds are still putting out buds, perhaps there will be a late summer crop, assuming that they can bring fruit to maturity between late August and early November. I shall be interested to see what, if anything, will develop in the gourds planted in the little conservatory where the blossoms will develop, if at all, only after the cotton dusting will have been finished for the season.

As the winds or even the vaguest air current, carries the dust for miles, there's no point in covering up anything when local fields are being worked over, since the devastation can be effected from poison scattered miles away and beyond one's ability to determine where or when. I guess one is lucky to get any fruit of the vine at all.



7522

Ora telephoned this morning to ask if she might bring her boys down one afternoon this week to see the murals. It seemed like quite a time since I had heard from her. She said everything was going along nicely in her family. One of her daughter's friends, living in some city in North Louisiana, was married last Saturday evening. She had invited R. B. and Ora and their daughter, Anne, and Jack Kelly, who has been courting Anne for over a year, I guess. The Williams party arrived early in the afternoon and while Anne was giving a hand to the impending bride, Ora and R. B. found themselves alone with Jack who took that opportunity, in a delightfully old fashioned way, Ora said, to ask for their daughter's hand in marriage. I didn't suppose such customs had survived the reckless 1920's, but here was a case in point.

The youngsters will probably get married in the Spring, what with Anne having one more year before she finishes at L. S. U. and Jack has a year and a half before he completes his law course. But they are two nice kids and I'm all in favor of the nuptials.

I got around to read a few more pages from the General Dean Story last night and my admiration for the General as his personality emerges from the pages of the book, increased not at all. I shall take the opportunity of Ora's visit to outline an annual Natchitoches Pilgrimage. Since I am doing considerable outlining of the tour being talked about but not worked on to raise money for the old Lemee House, I assume I might just as well go ahead and make the thing an annual affair so that the money floating around the State, as spent by tourists, may be devoted for some purpose having to do with preserving ancient buildings or beautifying the region. I shall prepare an agenda which I shall present to Ora with recommendations that she present it to this or that organization at the appropriate time, probably prior to this year's tour which will be a fiasco, since no plans for it will be made until it is too late to carry them out effectively. Since the Christmas festival the 1st Saturday of each December draws an ever increasing number of pre-holiday visitors, my thought is that it should be left intact. As November frosts, however, have "cooked" vegetation, it is no time for a Cane River-Natchitoches tour, per se, and so I shall suggest a week end annual pilgrimage to take place on the Labor Day week end when gobs of people will be looking around for some place to go. All I shall ask is that my name be left out of the business. And so Natchez can have its Spring frolic and Natchitoches its autumn one and a billie discontented biddies, dying to go any place anytime for any or no reason, can come through to their own satisfaction and the saving of some historic yesterday's.....

7523

Wednesday, August 17th, 1955.

Memorandum:

The enclosure speaks for itself but leaves me a little puzzled. If I read it correctly, I might be expected to see if Rangeon would like to be-take himself to Menck Corner and after that, I might find out if Menck's Corner would like to see him, and then, after that, assuming that neither party had changed his or her mind, I might do something else.

Well, I wrote Menck's Corner to inquire first, in pursuance of the letter stating that they were casting about for somebody, and I haven't the vaguest notion of striking out in the direction of Burma before The Bluff makes up its mind.

On the local scene, everything is probably lovely with the ladies across the fence for they took off for a day's outing in Alexandria at some pre-coffee hour this morning and the last I knew, hadn't returned as yet.

Also missing from the local scene is any sign of the African House plates on which I had been counting, -- shipped from the Rock Hall source on the 5th. They must have become tangled up with Connie or Diane.

Also absent from the local scene, is that Collins gentleman who vanished, plane and himself, last Thursday. Carmen told me on the telephone today that his wife is having quite a rough time, what with crack-pots from all around, within a 180 mile radius, telephoning her to say that they think they have seen wreckage or that they heard an explosion on Thursday night or some such, and not one of the leads turning up the slightest bit of evidence that there has been an air crash in the vicinity of the reported wrecks.

The newspapers and radio apparently are omitting all reference to the Kansas City murder of the house wife which was so widely publicized a couple of weeks back when that horrible business occurred. I suppose the number of crank letters coming to hand in that case must be impressively numerous.



7524

I made some further explorations into the field of cotton spraying by air planes today and discovered that although the planes do not intentionally spray the gardens, the liquid carries endlessly and the gardens get as thorough a shellacing as the cotton fields. A sticky film of a consistency about equal to the glue on a postage stamp covers everything and it sticks to whatever it hits just about like the sticky stuff on said postage stamp on a humid day. It is no wonder the flowers of the vegetable, gourds and trees have a mighty rough time of it.

There's a box or yew hard by my gate, between Yucca and the African House. For years I have had the bad habit of snipping off a leaf as I have passed through the gate. During the past month I have remarked that each time I have plucked a leaf, the thing seems unusually goeey and it now occurs to me that it is this same film, covering the grass and leaves all over the place comes from the planes spraying the cotton. Murphy, who helps me in the garden these days, prior to cotton picking, tells me that his ducks, after taking a few blades of this sticky covered grass, head slap for water, and drown forthwith, the sticky stuff apparently closing their breathing organ so that they simply can't breath. Somehow it reminded me of the chemical used earlier in the summer to kill all the fish in the river.

All this must making mighty dull reading but I jot it down to give you a picture of what problems in gardening the new fangled insecticides bring in their train. And it goes without saying that I am glad that the season for dusting and spraying is over for this season.

I heard the sound of big machines working the new road today. Since the big rains, there hasn't been a soul in sight and it is said that the concern, contracting to black top the highway, had the machinery which they had borrowed for the job, sold out from under them. But they must have been able to round up a new batch, what with the racket going on and the dust that is flying. Mail seems thin these days, but pilgrims are unusually plentiful. --the last spurt, I suppose, before Labor Day. How nice it will be when that event has come and gone.....

7525

Thursday, August 18th, 1955.

Memorandum: Susie's passing must vastly lighten

the cares of the whole menage and particularly for Maude, things must seem less depressing in view of the hopeless condition in which Susie has existed for so long. As Susie was never any comfort to Madam Marco, perhaps the latter will find her own existence that much happier and I have a feeling that Atlanta friends may find it easier to drop in and do for one that was possible when there were two patients to be considered.

It goes without saying, of course, that I shall be writing Madam Marco a letter tonight and I'm positive that I shall touch but lightly on the matter of Susie's death which, by now, must be a matter to which it is better than one should dwell on but briefly.

Ora came down this afternoon and we had a real pleasant chat, sitting the whole time in the upper chamber of the African House where we could glance from corner to corner as we recovered quite a few points.

She brought me a cherry pie, home made, which I propose to sample tonight while reading more about General Dean's fare of rice water during his captivity.

Ora brought down the recent copy of Time to read me the article about Thomas Mann which I enjoyed much because I learned much about the man and his writings. For instance, I hadn't



7526

realized before the his volume, "Joseph and His Bretheren" was inspired by the author's interest in Mr. Roosevelt and his New Deal, and, not having been in touch with the press since Mann's return to Europe, I hadn't known of his popularity in Germany in recent years and how somehow he had come to symbolize German unification and how Lubeck and other places in his native land had honored him. I smiled to myself when the article enumerated contemporaries on the European literary scene, -- contemporaries of Mann, and how Glasworthy, whom I had mentioned recently in connection with him, appeared in the Times list and how little Mardel did not, although Gide did. Every man to his taste but for me, I can't imagine Gide taking precedence to the point of eclipse over Proust.

I spread out my idea of creating an annual autumnal Cane River pilgrims and Ora was entranced at the thought and the way I had envisioned it. I asked her to give the matter of presenting the plan appropriately, if possible establishing it in some such manner that the civic leaders in the men's section of the town might have as much or more to do with its operation than the women, since there seems to be endless scuffling going on between this group and that and Ora's sister-in-law at Beaufort convulsing every effort on every undertaking that is ever launched. Perhaps I shall ask Charles Cunningham to telephone me from his home one night this week end so that he and I can talk without interruption as would be the case, were I to drop in to see him at his office.

At long last, the African House plates, bearing the couple of new lines concerning the murals, arrived by Texas and Pacific turck this afternoon, giving me an opportunity to get these on order wrapped up and ready for tomorrow's mailing. I should be delighted to send you as many of these as you would care to have, although in view of your limited space and since they are precisely like the other African House, except for the legend, I hesitate about putting any in the mail, thinking you would prefer to have me hold these against some future delivery when things are less pressing and perhaps there is a better opportunity to add this modified item to your collection. Your advise in this matter will be carried out to a T and understood perfectly if it is felt it would be better to wait a little. After all, they will represent standard stuff henceforth and may be drawn upon at any time.

And so to the mail and after that to General Dean and the cherry pie and so to bed.....

7527

Friday, August 19th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Our marvelous weather continues. The cotton polls continue pepping and "So-say-shun" is going full tilt, just about a week or 10 days before cotton money begins to ooze and thereby make "So-say-shun" a success. But hard headedness is something I don't have to expend my energy on in the field of the colored Baptist Churches and so I am quite willing to let their arrangements flounder as they will.

And while on the subject of such matters, I might as well jot down a surprise for me in the gardening department today which, in quite another bracket, tends to illustrate how essential supervision must be constantly expended on helpers, even those who are more or less trained in their particular field.

I think I have mentioned that I planted some gourds in big pots inside the little conservatory by the side gate. The first batch I planted are now up out of the ground to the extent of about 8 or 10 inches. Later I planted some pumpkins in enormous jars about the size of an ample garbage can. As these were placed a few feet below ground level and as rodents sometimes frolic through the place, I was not surprised when Murphy, who raises vegetables wonderfully at his own cabin, came to me to say that on investigating the pumpkin seed, he discovered that something had dug up a few and eaten them. Knowing that rats love the corn meal in which Decon poison is concocted, I gave him a couple of pounds of the stuff and told him to place it near the pumpkin centers. He did so, he said, when I asked about it later in the day. This afternoon when checking on a couple of things in the neighborhood, I stepped to see if the pumpkins had emerged above ground as yet. They hadn't, and possibly I discovered one good reason. Murphy had put a pound of poison slap over the surface of the earth in each pot, stiffling any embryo plant that might have had an impulse to grow. That's what is called Life on ye olde plantation. but death to the pumpkins, too.



7528

It is always good hearing from little Miss Parrish and I'm holding the thought that her part of Connecticut may not be under water tonight, especially did it come to mind when she mentioned the couple of ponds on the place.

I took a further step in the direction of the Annual Cane River Pilgrimage today by getting in touch with Charles Cunningham. He thought the way I had worked it out was excellent and asked me to send it to him in the form of an extended letter, addressed to the Chamber of Commerce, of which he is a member and said he would present it at their meeting on September 6th. I demurred, saying we would do much better to get the thing completely organized as to management before presenting it. John and Thelma Kyser are in Mexico and one or two other key members of the community are out of town. We can well afford to await their return. And, besides, I should rather have one member of the organization, living in town, present the idea as his own rather than mine since most of the merchants are resentful of Cane River residents, claiming that we always get all the publicity while they pay all the advertising. Of course it is because of the Cane River plantation homes that half the tourists, if not more, come to Hatchitoches to spend their money in the town before and after "doing" Cane River, but these gentlemen, sound, hard headed business men all, can't see that.

Charles, who has in the past, always printed the Christmas Festival program, told me today that the other newspaper in town, The Enterprise, is going to get the printing of the fee this year. He says that Carmen just about passed out when the "enterprising" members of the Chamber of Commerce decided that this year there should be no references to the historical aspects of the region but that on the contrary, the illustrations and articles should be about the industries, new high schools and so particulars covering subjects which can be duplicated in any town anywhere and precisely the sort of stuff that no potential tourist is interested in. I am glad to know about this for when Giles Mills pugh telephones me to ask about sharing costs of an advertisement for this year's program, I shall say, Thank you, but No. Something tells me that while the Festival may be a success this year, nobody will be pushing grandma out the window for a copy of the program. And so another week plays out. May there be wonderful calm at Lyme.....

0827

7529

Sunday, August 21st, 1955.

Memorandum: A comparatively quiet week and, with the sun continuing to push the thermometer up to the mid 90's and cotton bolls exploding thereby, according to some horticultural Hoyle. Sister blew in on Friday night about 10, having telephoned the day before, to J. H. to say that she would come down on Saturday. I didn't see her on Saturday morning as she begged to leave for Cloutierville sometimes between 7 and 9, no mistaking 8 plantation workers with her to put her house in order down yonder. Later my grapevine reported that when dinner time came and everyone was preparing to return here for dinner, she thought some extra chores for the workers, after they had all mounted the truck, and that her younger son, aged 13 or 14, asked the colored men aboard in a voice his mother couldn't hear: "What next with that old son of a bitch think up." It seems but apt that in view of his training, the son should employ a speech so identical with his parent. And so we had Winks for dinner, amid much bubbub but fortunately there was more work to be done in Cloutierville and so they departed after coffee, saying Goodbye all around since they were not coming back, but leaving all their luggage, naturally, and, as was to be expected, they all piled in again at the top of the supper bell. But, except for the younger son, they all did finally head out for Shreveport after supper, and one is thankful for such a comparatively brief tornado. There seemed to be only 2nd class mail coming in on Saturday but I did have a telephone from Marshall, Carolyn saying that she is returning to Baton Rouge and New Orleans on Monday, what with Delta movies needing her services for some script or other, and asking if she might drop in for a moment to check on one or two points about the newspaper articles covering the murals. I am hoping she makes it to New Orleans before "the children" decide to head up this way for she might be able to make it a little clearer to them than letters can indicate that they would do better to venture into the Cane River country after Labor Day rather than b



7530

2591, 2512, 2508, 2509

Thanks to the warm weather and the plentiful amount of water being spilled in their direction, the Orinoco bananas are doing nicely. I think I did not mention at the time of Blythe's last visit a circumstance that I thought rather typical of her unbridled enthusiasm for making odd flower arrangements. One of my agents, working beyond the fence in a vast tangle of shrubs and trees, reported to me a couple of days following her visit that before tapping on my door, she had armed herself with a hoe, resint at the moment on the gallery and had pulled down the first big Orinoco flower of the season and snipped it off, hiding it in her duffle bag. I was surprised on the following day when I discovered the loss, since the bananas form only as the petals unfold from the flower and that act of vandalism had knocked out that potential bunch for this season. But she is such an artist at doing remarkable things with flowers that I have no doubt many people were entranced with whatever she contrived for her next party and as other banana flowers began unfolding shortly thereafter, I could take the loss of the original flower with steadiness. Somehow it reminded me of the lemons she plucked a year or so back, but in that instance she at least had the grace to do so in my presence. A remarkable woman, wonderfully extravagant in gestures of friendship and equally so in appropriating garden growth that doesn't belong to her. For some reason, it never surprises me when people who aren't interested in gardens charge through them like a bull in a china shop but I am always amazed when people who cultivate parterres of their own don't hesitate about lifting stuff growing in other people's. A note from Robina which I seem to have misplaced, mentioned having a card from Rudolph, indicating he is seeing all of Europe. Although he was so kind as to give me his several addresses in Europe, prior to his departure, I never did take time out to write him. There seem to have been such gaps in our correspondence during the year that with two or three letters to him to Denton between January and June unanswered, I figured what with all he had to do abroad would make it possible for him to span July and August without hearing from me until he got back to Texas. He is a fine person but our last few meetings have convinced me that our interests are so different that hearing from him or not seems to cut very little ice. And so another week gets under way. I'm hoping Diane didn't make suburban travel unthinkable this week end.....

5227

7531

Monday, August 22nd, 1955.

Memorandum:

The weather continues fair and a little warmer, perhaps 98. The mail continues thing, with but a single 1st class item, as enclosed. You will note Miss Myra's observation on doings across the fence on occasion, merely bearing out reports of cock-eyed displays of temper on occasion, as mentioned in other memos.

But today everything was rosey over the coffee cups although last night my shoulders were much dampened by tears because "I never get an opportunity to go anywhere or do anything and next year I'm going to tour Oregon and Washington State". The latter coming a little unexpectedly unless one stops to realize that there was much disappointment this year that her girl friends didn't invite her to make the jaunt to Las Vegas with them. But this morning everything was in the best of all kinds of worlds for during the night she must have dreamed of becoming another Cane River rendition of Mrs. Balfour Miller, what with her chairmanship of the impending October tour. Apparently my plan has already leaked prematurely and visions of bigger and better tours are already buzzing in her brain. Fortunately she doesn't stop to realize that all such efforts is going to sum u in greater numbers of pilgrims and so the dizzy whirl goes 'round a 'round and one can but wonder at what gets it swirling and how it will pan out.

Carolyn telephoned this morning to say that Delta Movies had altered her plans for returning to the Crescent City today and that she plans accompanying the Director of the Shreveport office to Baton Rouge on the morrow, returning to Texas the same night and will probably spend the balance of the week in Shreveport, heading out for New Orleans next Thursday or Friday. The James Pipes Registers who were probably counting on seeing their neighbor will be disappointed, I suppose, but I'm hoping that doesn't impell them to get headed out in this direction before Labor Day week end has come and gone. I think it just as well, what with Kay's relatives living in New r anyway, that the bride and groom take a little while to settle down in their new apartment before they begin galavanting in any direction since the establishment of a home ought to go far in laying a domestic foundation, I should think, and I'm hoping the may do just that.

...and still it's a fine day to be out and about



7532

I saw Pat at breakfast. He said his trip down to the Rio Grand Valley had been uneventful and pleasant. His grandmother Cherry, now 80, had just returned from an automobile trip to Missouri, having driven her own car alone. She leaves next week on the liner United States, for a trip through England, Scotland, Holland, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Spain and France. and Pat wasn't sure although he thought he was going with a conducted party but he was quite sure she wasn't acquainted with anyone going at the time she was starting out. Isn't it a pity Eugenia, her daughter, is an alcoholic and is forever marrying the wrong kind of a man, for in the old days, she would have loved the European jaunt and it would have delighted her mother to have been able to have her daughter go with her.

Celeste had a card from Juanita, saying that she is back from the Dakotas and Canada and is planning to bring her mother, Mrs. Anderson, over for a week's visit, arriving a week from today. Celeste asked me if I would entertain on Monday since she is planning to head out for Baton Rouge for a frolic with the General's wife, leaving on Thursday and probably returning her on Monday night. She will drop Madam Regard off at Mansura on her way South and will pick her up on her way back. She said she planned to take up publicity and other details for the October pilgrimage as soon as Juanita returns to Conroe, probably on Labor Day. I should imagine that wouldn't be any too early to start giving some thought to the matter, at least trying to arrive on a date anyway.

For lack of anything better to do, the mowing machine operators were taken out of the hay fields this morning and set to work cutting more weeds along the fences, one result being that more of this year's gourd crop became exposed to the eyes of potential or prospective cotton pickers when they start to work a week hence. This means that I had better harvest some of the exposed fruit hanging on fences adjacent to the cotton patch. I am sorry to have to gather a couple of these items which I should have preferred leaving until November to see what dimensions they might have attained, for at present in shape and size they suggest the classic rendition of Hercules' club, each of the two gourd being about 4 feet in length, large at the end and tapering gradually as they approach the end attached to the vine. But these are big enough and after another week or so, I shall suspend them from a rafter in the African House on the theory that gathering before cotton time is likely to produce something, as opposed to nothing, from that exposed quarter where they are at present maturing.

I'm so happy the way this new ribbon performs, thanks to adjustments made in advance of its advent, and little Miss Lee...

7533

Tuesday, August 23rd, 1955.

Memorandum: How nice to find your favor of the 19th-20th in today's post. Even as yesterday's mail numbered but one letter, -- from Miss Myra, -- so today's held but one, but, Lord, how wonderfully satisfying it was.

It held a laugh in it, too, -- a stifled laugh, which came not from the writing but the reading, at the beginning of the first page and little did my secretary suspect with how much difficulty I maintained a dignified silence and bland facial expression. For instead of reading a name as you had written it, -- a name quite unfamiliar to him, I am sure, he spoke, in such a fashion, as he read the paragraph, -- directly from your lines, of a two day absence in the land of Rip van Winkle. That, you will agree, was putting a new "winkle" into the Catskill country side and half a dozen times since his departure, I have been saying Rip van Winkle over to myself and can't think why it sounds so hilarious but somehow it does, probably from the purely unexpected appearance of the "r".

It is so kind of you to take time to give me so notion as to how you made the trip and how things developed during your sojourn. Thank Heavens for the sunshine and Milky Way, following all the dampness that preceeded your arrival, -- and probably what fell on the region after your departure. How fortunate to have made the journey during that little interlude.

And may I thank you for giving me some hints as to how things turn generally. I am tremendously interested in all aspects of any subject having to do with the life and times of little Miss Lee and somehow the geographic distance seems to shrink wonderfully as one becomes better and better acquainted with around the clock operations in the lives of those so near in thought, so remote in mileage.

And I liked so much to read of the antics of your little feather friend. How nice for one party that the other didn't have a place for him. How much a part of our lives, a happy part of our lives,

.....



7534

such pets become. Perhaps it is by staying put, as it were, that they tend to maintain an evenness of spirit and in being just that, they supply us with an unfailing desire to greet them with each new day, a feeling, alas, which cannot always be ascribed to people who range further afield.

The Chairman of the autumnal tour leans more and more upon me for advise. I did not see her today as she was in the big road when I passed by for 9 o'clock coffee but she telephoned me this afternoon, somehow conveying the impression that she constantly has a chip on her shoulder for everyone except me, and I am not so dumb as to suppose there can be any exceptions in her somewhat frantic approach to everything these days. Lestan Prudhomme's aunt who owns the house in town where Lestan spent his last years, has been persuaded to put that house on the tour. It is a pretty house from the outside but not impressive inside. Celeste telephoned me to ask if I would see the lady about getting the place in proper order for the pilgrimage if she would down here to consult with me. I told her I would. I can already envision being called on for the written material in the pamphlet they propose getting out. There is something vaguely humorous in the fact that oldsters, so far as ancestral claims to a Hatchitoches residence is concerned, are forever complaining if an outlander contributes anything to the welfare of the Parish but when it comes to rounding up advice, information, etc., they always seem to have to turn to those very people who, according to their way of thinking, shouldn't really know anything about Hatchitoches history of which, in reality, they themselves appear to know nothing and, of course, care less.

Melrose and Beaufort are contributing their appearance on the tour to the good cause, --which is an effort to get money to continue furnishing the old Lemee House, while, on the other hand, Oakland has dickered to get 25 cents per head for each person on the tour stopping there. The Alphonse Prudhommés, although possessed of a pretty house, are poor and I can see their point, but I think it typically Prudhomme-esque, --penny wise and pound foolish, since the tour itself will serve more to beget more post-pilgrimage people than the tour itself so that their demand for 25 cents a throwaway the tour will rob them of the satisfaction of knowing they have made a generous gesture in behalf of an old house in town so that the profits coming from post pilgrimage business will not be so sweet, or so I should think, but Prudhomme point of view and mine would probably never harmonize and so it is ridiculous for me to speculate on such points.

So things turn, and the weather continues hot and business is dull in the road running section and so things turn.....

7535

Wednesday, August 24th, 1955.

How nice to find the copies of the Houston Chronicle in this morning's post. I am so glad to have these and gain I thank you for being so thoughtful and so generous to me. I have been bombarding the New Orleans Library to send me stuff for the past couple of weeks but that organization must have died or something, or gone on a vacation which is practically the same thing so far as getting results is concerned. I am glad I did not send back the Proust opus when I finished it months back, and so now I am again re-reading it, and, as invariably happens with most good books, I find oceans of stuff which I have read before but which I have failed to appreciate.

A telephone from Marshall this morning had as its purpose the request that I give a few moments to some Old Benita problems one afternoon this week and at the same time drop into the Shreveport Times office regarding the impending murals article. Knowing you truly as you do, you can readily imagine I received this call with something less than enthusiasm. It was pointed out that there was no rush about a decision, and I broke in on that by saying that putting off what one doesn't want to do is Fool's Paradise and then and there I allowed as how I would visit the Times office at 11 on Friday morning and then run out to Old Benita if transportation would be provided for a return here by first dark. This was agreed to, and so I shall hop a ride with Pat on Friday, for he is going that way by car on Friday morning and while I have no doubt the outing will probably do me good, the greatest pleasure it will afford is the realization that now that I shall have observed both the winter and summer problems of that d.b. of Texas, I may not feel impelled



7536

to break my routine again in that direction for ever so long,  
for flying about the countryside to one so accustomed to "staying  
put" induces a sort of fatigue which, although probably good for  
me, is certainly something I don't crave. I believe the lady  
expects to pass this way enroute to New Orleans, stopping  
off long enough to get color shots similar to those in black and  
white, the latter having turned out advantageously, I understand.

Our weather continues hot but seemed usually warm today  
because of the humidity which lingered on following a quarter  
inch rain this morning about 8:30. The afternoon was clogged  
with pilgrims, most of them pretty dull and I didn't see  
four from California which one of my secretaries told me had  
stopped at the store at one o'clock this noon, asking for me.  
I suppose this may have been some of Irma and Farley O'Brien's  
friends but that is only a guess, for it seems they mentioned some  
thing of the sort last winter or spring, but as you have  
had all the correspondence from that quarter, you will  
recall it has sometime (been sometime) since last anything came  
through from off yonder.

The ladies were in town this morning getting themselves made  
beautiful for the frolic of the impending week end, as they  
take off for their respective destinations tomorrow at  
dawning, I am told. I suppose I shall be dubbed Master of the Ho  
without any direct commission being handed to me in  
person. Perhaps the ladies will encounter J. H. on their way  
South as he is said to be in Orlando, Florida at the moment  
and returns on Thursday evening, and as the ladies will  
not return until Monday, everybody in that household  
is likely to be having a little vacation from each other over  
the week end.

Even as in business, so in the contacts with the outside  
world which I have, there are always surprises to be encountered  
in the personalities of people encountered. Today a Mr. and Mrs.  
Thurman, or some such name, appeared, unheralded from  
Baton Rouge. Mr. Thurman had gone to school with Stephen.  
I gave them a go-round but it was singing psalms to  
a departed mule. I think the high point came when the husband  
called the wife's attention to a cluster of butterfly lilies  
and she reminded him stoutly: "You know perfectly  
well that I don't like flowers of any kind." Poor  
lady.....poorer husband.....

7537

Thursday, August 25th, 1955.

Memorandum: I should pause, perhaps, to have a glass of Tender  
Leaf but I think I shall indulge myself in a little  
chit-chat with little Miss Lee first, for that is  
unfailingly exhilarating and, although Tender Leaf is  
passed off as a stimulant, something tells me that in  
view of a crammed full day, it is going to provide me with a  
sedative when I get around to it.

The day has been hot and humid and, as sometimes  
happens, --a daily pattern in your own life, no doubt, it has  
been one of those which has seen me on the jump from  
5 this morning until 7:30 tonight. The length of the  
day doesn't get into my hair but sometimes I would welcome  
a pause between whatever is next immediately after whatever was  
just before. The postman passed us by completely, so far as first  
class mail was concerned today but as I had telephone  
messages and other forms of greeting to be attended to, my  
go at this machine will be busy enough before I have  
the odds and ends of the day wrapped up and set aside.

One unexpected pleasure was the arrival of some  
Matchitoches people who said they had stopped at Plantation  
Court last week end and when they had registered, a gentleman  
told them that he had a friend living in that Parish and  
said his name was Lionel Jeanmard and that his friend's name  
was yours truly. And when they left, he asked them if they  
would deliver a package to me on his behalf and they allowed  
as how they would and thus I came into possession of  
a bottle of fire water which I have already stored away  
in the armoire against the next visit of one Lionel Jeanmard.  
I wanted to spend some time this afternoon with a strong  
armed gardener of sorts, what with the slight chance I shall have  
any help from about this week end until Christmas time but



7538

I had to break off at 2 to keep an appointment and, thanks to the advantage of the lateness of the arrival of the pilgrims, I was able to set the barber to work on my perruque under the big oak where the said barber could keep one eye on his clippers and the other on the gate. The thing came out perfectly as he pronounced his job completed on the hair cut at just the moment the pilgrims showed up. Clemence was waiting to see me but I sent her on her way until I finished with the tour, after which I scooted across the cotton patch to see some of her latest undertakings and before I got "set", a messenger came racing across the fields to say that Frances Henry had come to pay me a visit, prior to taking off for Japan. And so the day buzzed and it was first dark before my last visitors had gone and I could incline myself in the direction of this machine.

I am sorry that I was half asleep last night when I heard a couple of programs which would have interested me, had I been awake. One was somebody doing a number about the Houston Air Base and the pushing of the Ambassador from India into a second class dining room because the director of the place thought him and his secretary a negro. The other was a symposium on odds and ends in which the National Broadcasting representatives in Washington were discussing various subjects. Earle Godwin had something to say about how picayune modern investigations appear in contrast to those of 20 years ago or so and he gave one to understand that in spite of all the sound and fury, there really was nothing to a thing like the Dixon-Yates matter. Something tells me that a line group of Columbia reporters would not have come to the same conclusion, but somehow one expects the National to go on the assumption that everything is rosey, so far as big business is concerned. The hull dog and the bozen were waiting for me when supper time arrived tonight and I was glad to escort them to home for their food in order that my cat and her four kittens might have theirs in peace on the Yucca gallery a little later. I suppose the ladies in Mansura and Baton Rouge must be in the 7th heaven of delight, the Mansura one being with pleasant, relaxed relatives and the other in the midst of whatever Harper's Bazaar says is the correct thing, even though the darling canines probably don't get a line in the Harper's manual of what is merely human in relation to dogs or people.....

7539

Friday, August 26th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Our hot, humid weather continues without a cloud in the sky but the prediction for Saturday and Sunday is for rain, which will delight none of the planters, all of whom seem to have determined on Monday as the magical date for inaugurating the cotton picking season.

According to the Weather Bureau, a tiny tropical storm is moving in a northwesterly direction from New Orleans where it is now raining with every likelihood that this section of the State will be catching it during the next 48 hours.

At breakfast, I was mildly surprised to learn that Pat, who had invited me to make it with him to Shreveport, had changed his plans, forgetting to advise me, and had departed at 4:30 by plane for Natchez, Miss. This caused a dab of make-shift plans to be ushered forth on my part but I made it alright, and stopping off in town long enough for a cup of coffee with Rosalind who looked much better than the last time I saw her. She said she was just back from a stay in the Mother Cabrini Hospital in Alexandria. She said nerves were the reason for her hospitalization.

I made Shreveport by 11 where Carolyn met me and instead of going to Marshall, we took a lateral road which landed us at Old Bonita about noon. The roads taken were mostly gravel or black top and led through the little town of Karnack, a little larger than, say, Melrose. It is one of those semi-feudal places that still survive in Texas, Karnack being on the border between Texas and Louisiana. Why I mention the place is because the feudal lord is T. J. Taylor who is none other than the father-in-law of Linden Johnson. T. J. Taylor blandly claims he owns forty thousand acres of land and eighty thousand "niggers". His business house, a 2 or 3 story brick building has a big sign printed across it:

"I deal in everything. T. J. Taylor".

His mansion is two or three miles away from the hub of Karnack, nestling in a big grove of trees which cut off the view of the house. It is said the colored folks on the place



7540

exchange a mild form of serf status for the protection T. J. Taylor provides for them, although how benevolent he is in financial dealings with them, is anybody's guess. I wanted to mention this matter to you, thinking that as a back-drop, it might make it a little more interesting when running across Linden Johnson's name in the press.

At Old Donita, we had lunch after making a survey of some of the farm problems, --where fences should be placed, etc., as against future shrub planting, etc., and then sat and chatted for a while with Carolyn's mother who had driven out from Marshall to say Howdy. I was astonished that this lady in her mid 80's and so crippled as to require a cane to get about on foot, should be driving her own car and all by herself.

After her departure for Marshall, we drove by back roads, --7 or 8 miles by such routes, to Jefferson, Texas. I was glad to have this glimpse of the place and found it a lovely place, distinctly more in the Louisiana than the Texas manner. I did not want to meet any of my acquaintances living there, for that would mean getting bogged down in chatter, and so we drove about the place, viewing some lovely old mansions, rather less decorative than some of the Natchez ones but wonderfully appealing in their simplicity and substantial classicism. I also saw the private Pullman car of old Jay Gould which the town recently acquired and has taken under its wing as a sort of small museum. It was Jay Gould who intentionally wrecked the civic center of Jefferson, so logically the dominant urban center of the region, by discarding his original plans to have the railroad run through the place, re-arranging things so that instead of crossing at Jefferson, the rail lines would converge at Dallas, so that Jefferson's population slumped from 20,000 to 2,000 while Dallas jumped from about 2,000 to a quarter of a million.

Before sun down, we were back at Old Donita to take a survey of the far bank of Storm Lake where some planting is to be done for reflections along the margin of the lake and the hour was good for such observations, what with sunset reflections being strong enough to be readily seen, and by first dark we were headed back toward the Cane River country again and, frankly, I'm glad to be at Yucca again, glad to have seen what the day had to set forth but delighted I won't have to do that chasing again this year. J. H. got back from Orlando, Florida and Celeste remains in Baton Rouge, playing cards in the rain, I suppose, with each man to his taste, as nearly as possible, and I delighted that I can now stay put.....

7541

7541

Sunday, August 28th, 1955.

Memorandum:

I jot down the date line and gasp as I realize in so doing, how fast summer is running out.

I have a feeling that next week end, in spite of all the Labor Day galavanting by the World and His Wife, will scarcely be more busy than was this one.

Fortunately a rain on Saturday afternoon discouraged a few people and that was a help for it enabled one to get some work done without interruption. Carolyn took pictures in color of each of the four corners in the mural section, plus the medallion. And after that was accomplished, each separate panel was photographed in color. It doesn't sound like much work but it does represent quite a lot, not only on the part of the photographer but on the property man as well, what with all the pushing about and moving of furniture, getting the windows properly draped in order to filter light to the proper degree, elevating benches to the point where their coral tinted surface will get into the line paralleling the gray shelf below the individual panel, etc., etc. And then repeating the thing a dozen times or more as the concentration shifts from one composition to another.

After supper, we passed by the artist's house to leave some boards on which the Hirshes, who were here three or four weeks ago, wanted to have painted. Fortunately Clemence was sighted coming along the road to her house from her daughter's cabin a little further up the road. Once glass at the figure silhouetted against the dripping evening sky was sufficient to tell me that it would be better to keep the boards until another day, for I could tell my the way the arms were swinging that the artist was feeling exhilarated and that probably sometime during the past hour or two she had visited the local honkey-tonk and invested in a dab of wet groceries. But her tell-tale arms resumed their normally sedate posture when she came into contact with visitors and it was obvious that the stimulant she had taken was much less effective than that which had been taken by her helper whom I discovered



7542

resting his eyes in the swing on the front gallery of the artist's cabin. We had a pleasant little chat and the lady said she would pass by Yucca in the morning. That suited me and, in accordance with her promise, she was up and doing at 7 this morning, and took the boards home with her. The reason I did not want to leave them Saturday night was based on the fact that in her enthusiasm to paint, doubled by the inspirational impulse induced by the stimulant, she undoubtedly would have fallen to work on the paintings, painting slap through the night, and the results might have been wonderful or wonderfully dubious.

We had such a pleasant dinner across the fence this noon, J. H. being in his usual good form and no one present but Pat, Carolyn, John Wenk, J. H. and I, --the ladies being still on their frolic. J. H. got to recalling some of his w round the world adventures and kept us all laughing. I had hoped to get a heap of work done during the afternoon but had to put off most of the fixing and re-fixing of articles until to night, for although I turned thumbs down on unknown pilgrims, I still had my afternoon thoroughly gummed up by friends, such as the Rands and the Blanchards from Alexandria, the Agarellas from Hatchitoches, the Sholders from Shreveport and so on and so forth. I think I shall be able to go to sleep readily enough when bed time arrives.

I don't recall if I mentioned in Friday's memo that I had the good luck to stumble over the "Conversation" program on Thursday night at 9:30 on an NBC Denver station. Clifton Fadiman had as his guests one Fay Emerson, Allister Cook and a gentleman whose name I did not catch. I assume this may have been a re-broadcast of a broadcast probably originating in New York at some other hour. I found it an entertaining item and am hoping you may be lucky enough to sample this series at some convenient hour, too.

Cotton picking is supposed to start on the morrow and perhaps it will, for the moon rides high in a cloudless sky tonight. But there seems to be no dew and that often indicates showers in the offing. Be that as it may, "cotton time" is just in the offing and gay times at the honkey-tonk are bound to be just around the corner as easy money begins trickling from the cotton rows.

I'm hoping it was comparatively quiet at Lyme and that little Miss Lee had an opportunity to do heaps of relaxing against the impending week before the holiday week end.....

7543

Monday, August 29th, 1955.

Memorandum:

And today was to be the first of cotton picking, but--- there were "widely scattered showers" and the prediction is for the same sort of thing on the morrow in spite of the fact that tonight's moon is big and round and lovely.

Before breakfast that Marshall woman got off to an early start and I got on with half a dozen odds and ends which I had put off from day to day for almost a week straight. It was good to have a restored routine and Labor Day looms large as a promise that once it has been achieved, we shall be jogging along even better in an accustomed autumn, winter and spring trailway.

Today's post wasn't much, --the Weeks Hall post card is so much a transcript of others in the same hand. The Peterson letter isn't much either except that it made me laugh when she remarked upon my poor physical appearance, slap on the heels of two or three people such as Ora, Dr. Knipmeyer and so on who have been remarking how full of health I appear to be, due in large measure, I suppose, to the fact that I have recently taken off a few pounds while I find myself hoping I can digest myself of at least 50 more.

Juanita and her mother arrived about 4 this afternoon. They came over to see me at 5 and we chatted about Juanita's jaunt into the Dakotas, etc, where, among other things impressing her was the fact that motels in that region usually charge from ten to twenty dollars a night, as opposed to an average of about five dollars for the best motels in this region. She says the reason is based on the fact that the operators of the institutions have to get all their money during the summer months as no one travels in those snow swept reaches in winter.

Before supper, we took a little walk in the gardens, her mother ranging farther afield than we. Juanita



7544

said she had been astonished at performances next door,  
for it seems that her car and Celeste's arrived here at  
about the same time and the ladies from this side of the fence  
went over to say Howdy but found themselves in a  
tempest in a tea pot. Celeste, on going through the kitchen,  
had bumped her knee on a little stool and hit the ceiling  
as a result, denouncing J. H. for not caring if she  
had been "wounded" or not and generally seeming to forget that  
Juanita and Mrs. Anderson were present. She said Celeste  
explained that she is simply worn out, having had no vacation  
in so long, etc., etc., --an old tune which seems to  
be harped on more constantly than usual this season.

At supper, J. H., coming in a little after we had  
begun, was laughing to Juanita about Celeste having  
stubbed her toe. It must be that this ability on his  
part to laugh at these episodes of ever increasing in-  
tensity, that makes it possible for him to put up with them.

Dan came down for supper but merely said "How do you do" to  
Juanita and her mother, --only that and not a single  
solitary word during supper, making everything perfectly  
delightful. As we left the summer dining room,  
the others having gone before, Juanita remarked that  
it is truly remarkable that two such cases as Celeste and  
Dan can be functioning at the same time, each on opposite  
sides of the fence and I must say that she seems so right.

I got around to read a page or two from a new book before  
folding up my beard last night. It really isn't a new book,  
except for me, being Carson's "The Country Store", which, as  
it is published by one of the University Presses, -- Oxford,  
I think, was probably a thesis at the beginning.  
Be that as it may, the author seems to have started  
developing his subject interestingly and I think I am going  
to enjoy the book. The Preface remarks that just as  
the country lawyer, country parson, country school teacher,  
all had a unique place in the expanding cross road communities  
of an expanding America, so, too, did the country store, where  
people living remotely, had their opportunity there to  
contact their neighbors and catch a glimpse now and then of the rest  
of the world through the news and social centers which the  
country stores were. I shall probably refer to the volume again  
before I have finished with it.

And now for some mail and thence to the Tender Leaf  
Department, and it will be wonderful when iced, for the day  
has been unusually humid.....

7545

Tuesday, August 30th, 1955.

Memorandum:

How nice to find a letter in a familiar hand. How marvelous  
to know that as of Saturday last past you had such a break.

I am particularly impressed by what you had to say regarding  
the hurly-burly of the past year and the pandemonium scheduled  
for the impending month. I can think of so many good  
reasons for one wearing himself out for a cause, --any cause which  
seems terribly important to the wearer-outer. But I am  
tremendously opposed to anyone wearing himself out for anything  
less than a cause, and doubly so when that anything else  
probably means nothing more than unknown stock holders receiving  
fat dividends while the worker doesn't receive a fraction  
of the earning which by every right should be his.

I take it as a matter of course that a business organization  
that is so geared up as to wear out its best people for  
the mere extra dividend for the stock holders should something  
both unethical and inhuman and ultimately bad business.  
Lots of people, like myself, for instance, so dislike change  
in business connections that they will put up with impossibilities  
far longer than any other reason would excuse. It would be  
so wonderful, but probably so impossible, if the powers  
that run the show could realize that they would be doing the  
business such a distinct service if they would but conserve  
the strength and good will of their best employees but  
that is probably something reserved for Heaven only. I  
urge you with all my heart to get out from under such pressure  
entirely by dis-associating yourself with the organization if  
those in control cannot be made to see that they have exceeded the  
limit in demanding the last ounce of strength and vitality.  
The organization, like the big industrial plants of the  
1880's and 1890's, will rock right along after all its  
present staff have been killed off. I pray you not to  
let the "system" do its evil work on you before you  
either force a lightening of the burden or withdrawing completely.

I am so appreciative of the splendid pen sketch you painted



7546

concerning the alteration and disappearance of familiar landmarks in Manhattan. I had not heard about the demolition of the Helen Gould Shepard mansion. How odd Fifth Avenue must seem at Easter time without the window boxes of blue and of pink hyacinthes. I am glad Grand Central is not to be torn down and in a way I regret the impending disappearance of Pennsylvania station, there is something so vast and so grand about its spaces. I believe it was modeled along lines of the baths of Caracalla and I suppose the station's main waiting room or concourse was among the larger rooms in America. I shall always have a tender feeling for the station, too, because of a temporary farewell made there some 16 years ago.

And may I thank you for that delicious paraphrase from the child's rendition of the Lord's Prayer: - "Lead us not into the Pennsylvania Station". Somehow it goes so nicely along side others we have loved such as "The man was in the garden, hanging up clothes, and along came a blackbird and snipped his nose slap off."

And thanks, too, for giving me some notion as to which part of Connecticut got the big flood. I'm so glad Quantness is not in that section.

On the local scene, the coffee hour was all radiance and peace and endless enthusiasm over the impending tour. J. H. said he approved of expenditures for new slip covers in the big house,--the last thing I should have ever asked but Celeste thought that the most important thing and it's nice to know she was sufficiently interested to think of anything and that J. H. liked the idea of joining hands to gain money to preserve the old Lemee house.

There was some very garbled talk, intentionally so, Juanita and I thought, about domestic matters in Baton Rouge. After the junior S. G.'s left the parental roof the other evening to return to their own nearby home with their one year old daughter, the General's wife threw herself on to Celeste's shoulder and wept,--a novel experience for Celeste, I must say, since she is usually the one putting on such acts. Juanita and I gathered that mother and daughter-in-law have struck a snag in their relations. Juanita and I had been expecting this since S. G. junior, selected a wife for himself, for Madam General is the type who must always give orders and in consequence, some sort of a flare-up might well have been expected long ere this.

It drizzled rain all day, making a mighty poor beginning for an indifferent cotton crop. But there was ample sunshine in this house, thanks to what the postman had to bring....

7547

Wednesday, August 31st, 1955.

Memorandum:

And so August comes to a close, the dampest in memory in these parts, --and probably in New England, too.

We were promised clearing weather this afternoon but it rained instead. It is said Alexandria got three and a half inches but we got only about half that, thank Heavens, what with the early cotton already showing signs of rotting in the bolls. But we are promised lots of dry heat for the morrow so perhaps September will make its bow under more favorable auspices.

This morning the postman carried away my letter to Bob Segeleau, asking about the Melrose film and its availability for tour propaganda. I was surprised when I glanced over the mail that had come in and discovered that the same postman had brought me a letter from Bob, as enclosed, indicating that he is taking up his residence, I assume permanently, in New York. I laughed in my beard when I pondered on one point, --that Patty and the baby are remaining in the Crescent City while the Clemence primitives are traveling with Bob to Manhattan. It goes without saying that if you should ever have any occasion whatsoever to contact Bob during his Manhattan stay, --does one assume it is to be a permanent move, --you will do so, using my name since basically we all of us have mutual friends and mutual enthusiasms.

The letter from Roberta Church was an unexpected pleasure. I shall drop a line to the lady whose address she supplied. It would seem that my contacts in the political field through Harry Chalkly produce results in one instance at least and I shall not hesitate using the same approach again if necessary, although I am always hoping that I may avoid that method since I tend to frown on political pressure for a Congressional Library matter unless the political means is proven to be the only one bringing forth results. I am forever hoping, however,



7548

that some such person as Miss Church mentions may supply me with a flock of particulars I should like to know something about although my letters will naturally be couched in such a manner as to permit their circulation generally and I cannot expect a person holding a Congressional Library job to speak very frankly on points I may raise, since that person must of necessity keep in mind his own job and of course doesn't know how confidential anything written to an unknown correspondent might be had. Monday work was resumed on the Melrose-Berumda road but came to an abrupt halt again when the rains came yesterday and did not resume today when the rains continued. It is said the contractors are losing money on the contract and accordingly aren't at all enthusiastic about anything that has to be done from here on out and there appears much to be done.

One of the twists given vegetation this year because of an unheard of March 27th freeze and ample rains in August is the present condition of the canas. Usually they are at their best in April and May. This year it's going to be late August and September, for only now are they attaining a height of from 6 to 8 feet and the effect is arresting in view of the presence of so many of the other flowers which usually don't have to worry about playing second fiddle to canas around Labor Day. But this year the crepe myrtles and butterfly lilies and the uernsey lilies, unusually beautiful, are possessed of a rival in the cana section, the net result being that the gardens never looked so lovely.

Last night a stiff breeze tended to tear a section of the Cane "iver-Goblin, now faded almost to the vanishing point, and so I moved it inside today, hanging it here in my boudoir just behind my desk where it looks shadowy and lovely.

I read a couple more pages from Carson's "Old Country Store" again last night and am looking forward to doing the same again tonight, eventually, when a few letters have been disposed of.

A party was in progress across the fence this afternoon so I assume everything over that way is as lovely and darling as it could possibly be, and even this morning, all was sweetness and light at the prospect of the October 15th tour. How hot, how cold that scatter-brain can blow.....

7549

Thursday, September 1st, 1955.

Memorandum:

Sumer has returned but somehow it has a quality about it that's like a sunshiney day in Spring in which man glories in gratitude for the happiness sufficient unto the day but somehow feels instinctively that more showers are in the offing.

And today came the familiar sound from the direction of the gin as the first bales of cotton bounced from the press. I suppose these must be made up of cotton picked sometime last week and held against today, since nobody in this region could have done much picking this week.

And there was another sound, seeming to come from four different directions to the four people with whom I have spoken about it. The hour was 11:10 this morning when something between a dull thud and an explosion shook Yucca, rattling the glass and china on the shelves here by my window. I thought it came from a Northerly direction. The clerk thought it came from the South. John Wenk thought it came from the Montrose Hills to the West. Clemence thought it came from the East, off Montgomery way. I suppose it may have been a jet plane, breaking the sound barrier, whatever that implies and yet nobody noticed a plane and the sound was of but a single boom and no repeats.

I can readily understand the position of the New Iberia citizens opposing the establishment of a jet base in that city. Frankly, I think the Army should establish such centers in comparatively unpopulated areas, such as Camp Polk in the Leesville area, some 50 miles West of here, but I'm glad there are no fields nearer than Alexandria, for we get enough of their racket, what with being on the bee line between those bases and Barksdale Field in the Shreveport area.

Carmen Breazeale telephoned me at 8 this morning to say she had just received an air mail letter from the advertising unit of Esso, expressing their delight at the general character of the Melrose photographs submitted to them for possible use in a map Esso is getting out on Louisiana, --and possibly Arkansas. It isn't clear to me just how this sketch is to be used in connection with the map for although the photostat she received is about 12 by 24 inches, I assume this will be reduced for the map



7550

when printed. There seems to be quite a text about Melrose, however, running through two or three paragraphs, and I can't see howso much text could be used on a map or in connection with a sketch assuming the sketch is to be tiny.

Carmen wanted to run through the text with me to see if it was correct in all particulars and I was glad she did so, since there were a couple of minor phrases that could be inserted, such as "by appointment only" where Melrose is mentioned as being a place where pilgrims are received by an ex-patriated Frenchman, -- "by appointment only" fitting in very neatly along about there.

In view of the wide distribution Esso maps enjoy, I suppose the presence of Melrose on it may call forth all sorts of problems but at the same time it may impress some of the Henrys that they have a place that lots of people are interested in and therefore lend another measure of weight to the saving of the place which poised so perilously on the brink of destruction a half dozen years back.

It was good hearing from Helen who certainly tosses off an entertaining letter usually. I think the one enclosed is a fine example. I smiled to myself when I read her line about failing to make any response on my part to an earlier inquiry she had made about me week-ending in Waco. It certainly is kind of her to be so thoughtful about transportation but it goes without saying I'm not dreaming about streaming across Texas for a week end. It wrecks me almost to venture merely across the border for a day in the Marshall direction. Come to think of it, I guess Helen didn't say anything about Carolyn making the jaunt. I'm wondering if those gals have actually drifted further apart, for it did seem to me they were definitely heading into such a situation a year or so ago. Well, I'm not going to Waco, not unless they move Waco a heap closer to the Louisiana line than it is today.

And, of course, it was good hearing from Dora, and how sweet of him to suggest I get "surveyed" for some new clothes. I shall ponder a bit on how I phrase my response to that request for frankly I have so many clothes now, I know not what to do with them, and the kind that he selects for me, by and large, may I say, are of a hue and cut not at all suited to my personality as I see it. It does seem to be such a regrettable situation when I should be so deli to help him dispense a dab of charity in the form of money but be-mean the move on his part to put a stack of money in clothing which I am bound in the end to give away.

With the ending of the air plane dusting assaults for this year, the vines of the gourds are beginning to sag with newly formed fruit so that it would seem that crop, if not the cotton and pecane, will be a bumper.....

7551

Friday, September 2nd, 1955.

Memorandum:

A lovely cloudless day, with a low last night, surprisingly enough, of 64, following a day of 90 degrees and it, in turned, followed by a similar thermometer reading. It is such a pleasant feeling, wanting to reach for a sheet before dawn.

That Marshall woman telephoned from Shreveport this noon, saying the movie people had bogged her down all week so that the articles for the newspapers had not be put in final form until last night. She asked if she might drop by with them tonight, run through them quickly and then dash back to Shreveport for an early morning conference. I said I could stand it if she could. It seems the whole crowd moves on Baton Rouge on Tuesday

for a week or so and this is about the only time the checking against the final drafts of the articles for the newspapers could be gone over. Personally, I am as glad that there was a delay since the first or second Sunday after Labor Day ought to find more readers than the week end when everyone is running up and down the big road.

And so the articles will be corrected tonight and typed over Sunday and Monday when the prints will also be finished up, and the whole business will go forward to the several Editors on Tuesday morning so that they may find a place either in the Feature Sections a week from Sunday or the following one.

I am hoping the week or two in Baton Rouge will enable the gal to slide down to New Orleans for a personal encounter with Mr. Ogden of the Times Picayune for I am under the impression that he is so much in a quandary about primitive art that it will take some face-to-face salesmanship to get the thing into the Dixie-Roto section.

I am also preparing some radio announcements for Hatchitocyes,



7552

Alexandria, Shreveport and New Orleans stations for release about a day or two before the newspaper articles are scheduled to appear. This will be a short dab of spot news, something to the effect that Mayor Frank Keys of Natchitoches, Dr. King Rand of Alexandria and Major General Stephen G. Henry of Baton Rouge will be the chief speakers at the dedication of the mural of plantation life in Louisiana, scheduled for unveiling "tomorrow", and going on to mention Clemence as the artist and so on. Perhaps I shall use the name of Dr. John Kyser of Northwestern as among the participating guests in the dedicatory ceremonies, and all the gentlemen above will undoubtedly be surprised when, if they do, hear their names rattled off over the air.

I got around to read a few more pages from the Hodding Carter opus, "Where Main Street Meets the River" last night and like Harnett Kane's way of telling a story, found it altogether readable. But somehow there was an element of the Kane touch in the factual aspects of the tale, worrisome only, I suppose, to those who know something about the Carter menage, and not at all disturbing, I suppose, if one were not. For example, as a story, it sounds very exciting to read that in 1932, the newly wed Carters were down to their last five dollars in Hammond, La., where his people lived and where the newly weds were running a newspaper, and how they headed out to spend the week end in New Orleans, stopped at the gambling casino at Southport en route to the Crescent City and won four hundred dollars so that they were able to go on with their newspaper at the conclusion of the week end. Of course the author doesn't explain that the brides parents were domiciled in New Orleans and were millionaires, for naturally the last five dollars wouldn't have made half so good a story if one had in mind that a million other bank notes of the same denomination could be drawn on from mama's little pile. I could be wrong but somehow I think one wouldn't be half so concerned about a man's last crust of bread if he knew the man's father-in-law was operating a bakery just around the corner.

Across the fence everything continues to appear as lovely as can be. Much more was spilled at coffee about the definite mother-in-law problem that has arisen in the respective households of the S. G.'s and S. G. Jurs., which was to have been expected a long time back what with the mother-in-law being distinctively on or distinctly on the dictatorial side. And so the week runs out and the prolonged week end begins. I shall be thinking of little Miss Lee so often and wondering what she is up to, --getting a little breather now and then, I hope.....

7553

Sunday, September 4th, 1955.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Wednesday envelope in Saturday's post.

And thanks for giving me a picture of the dreadful doings over at the Madison of which I had heard not a peep. Columbia, so much inclined to devote their services to international matters, must assume that local newspapers carry local particulars that I seldom hear anything of New York domestic doings on t at system. The National, over Des Moines isn't quite so exhaustive in its international news and probably reported the lady on the window ledge but I have been missing the 10 o'clock broadcasts from Iowa lately and that accounts for the news value of your report.

And thanks much for the clipping which informed me so much about what is cooking in the Grand Central region, and while writing the word, Grand Central, I wanted to ask about the news reel theatre you referred to as attending recently in that area. I am wondering if it is located in the station, which I should think would be an excellent idea or is it somewhere in the immediate neighborhood.

And I am delighted to have the Invitation to Learning publication. The list of the books is so helpful and at the same time, I am glad to have the complete names of some of the people appearing with friend Bryson, as I have had in mind to write one or two of them. I shall never cease being amazed at the way little Miss Lee is forever anticipating the Lestan needs.

Thus far, the Labor Day week end has been inordinately quiet, with ne'er a pilgrim on Saturday and only a North Carolina couple today. The latter had been to Clemence's house where they had invested in a picture and she had sent them over here to observe the murals.

And speaking of the later reminds me that Carolyn finally made it after moon-up on Friday night and we fired up a couple of manuscripts and decided upon which pictures to use for different papers. She took off before sun-up on Saturday morning and I suppose is printing up the pictures and re-typing the articles this week end, probably at Old Bonita. I suppose the articles will go into Tuesday's post from Marshall or Baton



7554

Rouge, not giving the Editors time, probably, to get them in next Sunday's edition, but that doesn't matter since the pre-holiday rush will not get under way in September probably, although it always seems but a jump from the first Monday in September until the 25th day of December.

After the North Carolina people had left, Peter and Bau Mack passed this way in search of a stimulant. Peter said he had been in a scuffle with Clemence's helper in the road and said the blood on his hand was from the sock he gave the helper over the eye. A few minutes later, Clemence came, saying nothing about her helper's condition but talking much about her enchantment with the North Carolinians and handing me a bottle of gin which she said Madam Rand, dropping by her house, had sent to me. If this follows the usual patter, the Rands will be at their camp on the morrow, having people with them whom they will bring over here.

I got an opportunity to do a bit of Saturday night reading which I devoted to the Carter opus. In speaking of the excellent assistants he had while working in Washington during the war, he mentioned William R. Hogan, that gentleman from Tulane, who wrote Miss Cammie the poison letter about me concerning the William Johnson diary. I must say I think Carter knows how to write, and especially what not to put in. I so wish I could persuade Anne Parrish to do the same sort of thing that Carter, Percy and Saxon did and I think I shall lay down another barrage in that direction on the morrow.

And as for the morrow, it will be a holiday for the mail riders and so there will be neither in-coming or out-going post. I shall accordingly hold this memo and attach it to tomorrow's.

Thus far the local weather has been wonderful for a holiday, only partly cloudy and although amply warm, still sufficiently mild to be altogether pleasant. It is Lyle's birthday, and well do I recall this 4th of September in 1938 when Christian and I were spending our first week end here and incidentally helping Lyle to celebrate his birthday. It was wonderfully hot that week end but there was lots of cracked ice and more fire water than anybody could manage. I shall always marvel at the sensation I experienced when leaving on the following day, Lyle having returned to New Orleans at 5 a.m., and Mrs. Moore, Christian and I leaving just after dinner. I loved the place and although there wasn't the slightest shred of reason for me feeling so, I instinctively felt that that initial visit was but the prelude to others in spite of the fact that I hadn't the slightest notion as to how a return trip yet even be engineered or when.....

could

7555

Monday, September 5th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Perfect weather for a holiday, --with a thin cloud coverage that kept the thermometer in the mid 80's and enabled the cotton pickers to fill up their sacks without getting to fagged out by the heat.

Oddly enough I had but a couple of sets of pilgrims, both hailing from Texas. Perhaps it's the first of three pourings of tar on the new black top which is discouraging pilgrims. Whatever the reason, my day was comparatively free so that I could concentrate on gardening and I welcomed the opportunity.

At the coffee hour I found both ladies at home, marvelous to relate, and withal in a gay frame of mind. This may be due to several reasons, foremost of which for Celeste was the fact that at the Lambre camp where friend Postell would have spent the summer, had he not been in Formosa, a picnic was scheduled for afternoon and evening and Celeste was going. She delivered an invitation to me which I was glad to decline. Madam R. gard was planning to spend an afternoon at home alone, and the perhaps accounted for her gaiety, since she likes the peace that is hers when alone. I am beginning to wonder if an effect may have been produced on Celeste when the General's wife wept on her shoulder last week, the experience of having someone other than herself doing the weeping must have been so startling. Whatever the reason, gay she is and I make the most of it while it lasts which probably will not be long.

Money is so important in determining the activities of all people that I sometimes find myself mildly surprised that seldom, if ever, does a writer of memoirs ever mention the matter in any fashion that make his life story comprehensible to me. I read some more from the Carter opus last night, --the part



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wherein he recounts the purchase of the Carter summer home in Maine in 1945 from Mrs. Zimbalist, daughter or widow of Edward Bok. The author describes the place as wonderful or words to that effect. One reason for buying the estate was because Carter thought he might lose his sight and it would be a comfortable retreat where he could dictate books, since in 1945 it appeared he would lose control of his Greenville, Miss., newspaper, making it impossible to live in that city. But in an earlier chapter, without mentioning Maine, Mr. Carter had explained how a hundred and four thousand dollars had been borrowed eventually and the paper saved. Perhaps because I have read the book as carefully as I might have, but be that as it may, it does seem odd that faced with the possible loss of both eyes and one's newspaper, one blandly goes out and purchases an ancient estate with mansion. In the latter purchase, I suspect the Wurline millions must have figured somewhere in the background but no peep has ever been made of the Wurline. And its absence doesn't detract from one's interest in the book, in fact the book is more exciting as it spings out the successful act of a couple pulling themselves up by their boot straps, but I cannot help thinking that the way the money angle in the Carter career has been handled, while making for entertaining and more exciting reading, does not present to true a picture.

I was sorry to learn in your recent letter that you were unable to tune in on Ed. Morrow's return. I, too, missed the opening remarks but about half through the broadcast, he remarked that people contending with manual labor probably found a flock of the finer points in foreign relations less vital than their immediate problems and while he was trying to operate a bulldozer on rough ground and driving a tractor in smoothing off the land, he, too, readily found himself concentrating on those immediate concerns rather than more remote matters.

I liked the Morrow quotation from Shakespeare tonight, apropos to returning week end travelers:

"At home I am better."

Clemence came to see me today, obviously itching to set her hand to a larger canvas than the conventional size on which she has been working since the African House murals were finished. She said: "I sure likes to make them big pictures", and there was undoubtedly a hint in her casual observation, seemingly casual for she knows I have two or three large boards and probably pretty evenly balanced in her mind is the desire to have a go at them for their own sake plus a dab of remuneration. It's fun, nevertheless, to see her fish and fiddle for permission to take a swing at broader acres.....

7557

Tuesday, September 6th, 1955.

Memorandum:

I was surprised to hear the Weather Bureau from Shreveport announce this morning that a trace of rain from Gladys Hurricane spread North from the Rio Grande as Alexandria which had a dab of rain yesterday. At 6:30 this morning, we had a couple of sprinkles and Bayou Hachez got a shower, but the balance of the day was sunny and 90-ish.

I had a notion that the articles for the newspapers covering the murals might arrive today as Carolyn had expected to drop them off on her way to Baton Rouge. But she telephoned tonight, saying that office. Interruption..... About half an hour ago, Carolyn called from Marshall, saying she had been in endless scuffles with the movie people at their Shreveport Office all week and that she planned to print the illustrations for the newspapers on the morning tomorrow, drop them off her on Thursday afternoon and drive on to keep a date appointment with some of the Administration people on Friday morning.

At the place indicated in the above paragraph, the telephone rang. It was New Orleans calling, --Dora and Kay for a harmless chat and to express the hope they might come up next week some time. They said Aunt Willie is flying in to New Orleans from Charleston on Friday and will pause for a few days and then fly on to California to spend a few more, after which she will drive East again with Irma and Fraley, stopping by Melrose "sometime in October". I sure hope they don't make it on the 15th when the pilgrims arrive.

I told the children that Carolyn would arrive in their fair city on Friday night, following her Baton Rouge appointment and so the four of them can have a busy round for the week end. If I can just "stay put" everything will be lovely, I hope. There was a new ripple on the surface of Cane River gentry which I heard about today which I thought wonderfully edifying. I think I have mentioned in times gone by about the remarkable tea which Miss Cammie, Madam Beaufort and I attended years ago.....



7558

at the plantation of Dr. and Mrs. Hebert Prudhomme, --  
the tea which Harnett Kane mentioned in some way or other in  
Plantation Parade but I don't remember just how. Well, anyway,  
Beth Beaufort Cloutier is always setting such high store by  
the Prudhommes that this latest wrinkle seems doubly amusing to me.  
One of the sons of Dr. and Madame Hebert Prudhomme is Jean, who  
was at the tea and who struck me as being rather on the dumb side.  
Be that as it may, he eventually took unto himself a wife and there  
have been 3 or 4 children, the first day of each just about 9 months  
apart. His wife is again pregnant but that didn't deter the  
young couple from accepting an invitation to a dance at the Country  
Club last Sunday night. Sometime during the evening, the wife  
allowed as how she was ready to go home and her husband  
allowed as how he wasn't. And so the wife got in their car  
and went home and sometime later, Jean's brother drove him home. But  
Jean's wife met him at the door and told him to be-take himself  
elsewhere, which he started to do, returning to his  
brother who had not yet driven away. Then, on second thought,  
Jean told his brother that after all the home was as much his as  
his wife's and that he thought he would go in regardless. And  
that he attempted to do whereupon said wife shot him once, the  
bullet going through his lung, stomach and kidney and don't  
ask me in which positions either could have been to have effect  
such a bull's eye ringer. Jean was rushed to an Alexandria  
hospital where, following an operation, it was said he may  
recover. His wife is at home and although her story doesn't jibe  
with anybody else's, the authorities did nothing about the matter  
as the lady explained she was simply handing her husband a revolver  
when, --she knows not how, -- it exploded. So sorry. And  
it's just that type of gone-to-seed first families that turn up  
their noses when a negro goes on a frolic and does a big of gun  
practicing at the honkey-tonk on a Satu day night.

Celeste explains that she can understand the wife's position  
exactly, as, I suppose, many of the Prudhomme associates can, but  
let us hope that all the ladies in the upper social brackets don't  
take a page from this example and begin shooting holes in their husband  
if the latter get home later than they do.

What a pretty business they have going on in  
Mississippi, not too far from Greenville, --Money, of all days,  
is what the town is called, I believe. When the hill billies  
get around to lynching 14 year old youths, you may be sure the racial  
thing in the schools will be hitting a high pitch before the  
present semestre has played out. The ultra conservative  
Shreveport Times says editorially that Mississippi is doing  
everything it can to see that Justice is done. Not quite  
everything, I should say, even though the Governor assures the  
world Mississippi doesn't condone murder. Imagine.....

7559

Wednesday, September 7th, 1955.

Memorandum:

A lovely summer's day and "all God's chillun" are picking  
cotton, I hope.

The postman simplified one aspect of life by bringing  
me nothing. Tomorrow, I have no doubt, he will make up  
for lost time which will be alright, too.

Dan appeared at dinner. He said J. H. wanted me to  
knock off on historical sketch of the Kate Chopin house which  
the Wenks are trying to sell through some real estate  
agency in town. I accordingly marched to the store following  
my demi-tasse and ripped off the thing in five minutes.  
As I started out, Dan asked me if the article would be  
ready within three quarters of an hour so that he might take  
it to town with him. I told him J. H. already had it in  
his office. I am so glad to do anything that will assist  
in cutting Cloutierville ties from Shreveport although I  
cannot imagine disliking anybody so much that I could  
recommend that they purchase property in Cloutierville.

It would be an ideal place for a doctor but such a shortage  
of physicians continue that nobody wants that lucrative  
place which really is a gold mine if anybody can close his eyes to  
the neighborhood and the neighbors for five or ten years and  
then pull out after having rounded up from a quarter to  
half a million, as, I believe, would be quite possible.

There isn't a doctor within a radius of 30 some odd miles from  
Cloutierville and within that circumference dwell thousands  
of people. What a travesty of modern civilization that  
the American Medical Association can successfully limit the  
number of people in that profession. It is so outrageous  
that I will do better to avoid getting started.

telephone interruption.....somebody wants to know the history  
of their ante bellum house in Natchitoches, built by their grand  
parents.

The movie people, filming "Louisiana Report" were here today to



7560

take pictures of the finished road which isn't precisely finished. I was glad I escaped them. J. H. asked me if I wanted them to take any shots about the gardens, but as the script calls for nothing but a reference to the big house, I said I thought they had covered the place adequately on former visits.

Late in the afternoon Clemence came to see me, saying that Mrs. Wood and her mother, who had been to see me earlier, had stopped at her house to leave a canvas they wanted painted, -- a honkey-tonk scene. But I didn't pay too close attention to what the artist was saying as she was a picture in herself, for she was toting a dab of beaver board, 4 feet by 6 feet, making her look like a toad under a cabbage leaf. Had a good breeze sprung up as she was crossing the cotton patch, I believe it would have carried her off to the moon. What she was carrying about her person was a section of the board I had cut out two or three months ago, thinking I might eventually have her do a section or two for Yucca. She had asked if she might take the board home with her and I had said it was alright but I was afraid she would do just what she did, -- find herself unable to resist the impulse to paint on it although we hadn't discussed the subject matter. There's lots of sky, rather pretty, and much horizontal stuff in which figures a water melon patch and people about to sample the melons, -- to the left, and off to the right, of the section is a curious looking building, rather suggestive of Yucca in appearance but the whole interior devoted to an elongated Chapel of the Blessed Martin. Both the cotton or rather the water melon patch and the Chapel are on the same horizontal line which is about 10 inches from the base of the board, and in that 10 inch space, running from left to right are lots of figures of local characters which are interesting and amusing, and the treatment withal pleasant as glad to talk with her for a few minutes because she seemed tired enough to welcome a little relaxation and she was altogether delighted with a couple of things I had to show her, for while she has raised plenty of gourds in her time, she had never seen any that approached the measurements of those recently hung on the front gallery and she was as delighted as a child. It will be a wonder if gigantic gourds don't start creeping into her pictures one of these days. And then she saw a yellow flower about a foot long, in a vase in the house, a single baby elephant ear along side the blossom. She asked if the leaf had anything to do with the flower and when I told her she was looking at the flower of the elephant ear, she couldn't believe it. She said she certainly didn't know they ever had flowers and looked not exactly doubtful but mighty puzzled. I took her back onto the front gallery where 3 or 4 were growing and she was convinced but declared she wished Miss Cammie might have known about such a thing as she was sure they had never grown here until comparatively recently. And so I picked three blossoms for her and gayly she flew back across the cotton patch, relaxed if not rested and probably all primed for a big night's painting spree.....

7561

Thursday, September 8th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Another perfect day for rounding up cotton but the pickers point out that so few bolls are open they have to wear out their sacks dragging them so far before getting them filled.

I find myself wondering if that sticky spray the air planes scatter across the country side doesn't tend to seal the bolls even as it does the gourd buds, even though the cotton bolls aren't so delicate as the gourd blossoms.

My telephone rang this afternoon. It was Madam Beaufort calling Celeste. She recognized my voice and went in for a dab of chit-chat, complaining that she didn't like the idea of having pilgrims come to her house, as of October 15th. She asked me where I stood in regard to the matter and I said I approved the purpose of the tour, gathering money to preserve the old Lemee House and that I was glad to do what I could to lend a hand. She didn't seem to like that slap much. She said she was going to have flowers flown in from New Orleans to grace her elegant salons. I told her I was going to fly around the local garden and gather autumn leaves to achieve whatever effect I could. She said Vernon is depressed about the failure of the cotton crop. I told her I sympathized but that I had none to lose.

Carolyn was delayed at the Shreveport office and so did not head South until after closing time. She arrived here about first dark and we hastened to do captions for mural illustrations, etc. She brought a copy of this month's, --October, -- Holiday, in which there is an article about the Atchafalya but we did not get around to read it, what with the details on the newspaper articles to be polished off and the fact that I insisted on an early folding up of the beard since she plans to take off at 5 in the morning for Baton Rouge. She goes on to New Orleans to see the Storm-Registers this week end before returning to



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7562

Baton Rouge for labors among the politicians. What a mad life of flying up and down the road. I guess my "stay-put" type of life would kill her and I know her whizzing about would put me under the sod in a week. I suppose old Father Time is setting his seal on me, too, but I know not if it be in the perruque department, as is ture with her for her hair seems (h<sub>a</sub>ir) seems to have turned from brown to almost white during the past year.

While at gardening today, I discovered some more gourds that have been forming during the post spraying & period, and the thought occured to me they, with some other ingredients, might make an interesting article, vaguely suggestive of Voodooism for some magazine. What with the formidable rray of bannas for a back drop, both at Yucca and at the African House, I envision getting two or three ancient ladies of color into appropriate settings, each fiddling with gourds and add to the scene a few stalwart negroes, rigging up clusters of the fruit and perhaps a shot of Log holding his latest offspring, about 3 weeks old, perhaps the baby on one arm and a gourd, three times the size of the child, in the other, and a few such pictures in color might t lll a striking story about the Gourd Festival in Louisian's Cane River country that would make a striking note in some publication like Look. I shall mull over the matter this week end and see what I can come up with for said purpose.

Zelma came to see me this morning. She is looking wonderful and doesn't have to go back to the hospital for treatment until the 26th. She brought with her a letter from Little King, asking if 6 or 7 plates in the Cane River series could be sent him in Germany. Of all the unexpected places to stumble over such creations in the old home town where he is still stationed is certainly a coincidence on which to ponder, don't you think.

Zelma said she thought Little King was scheduled to remain in G. for at least another year although I suppose nobody really knows w how the next hand of cards will be shuffled, although the results of the high level talks going on at the moment in Moscow may determine in part, perhaps, how the chips will fall during the twelfth month just ahead.

Everyone must be in the Th Heaven of delight across the fence tonight for there is some sort of a bridge game in progress and the lights from that direction suggest an illumination for Bastille Day. Well, so much for the moment and I fear today's report constitutes mighty dull reading.....

copy

Friday, September 9, 1955.

7563

Our ideal cotton picking weather continues and the Weather Bureau says it looks like the same thing straight ahead for the next 4 or 5 days.

The clerk and I dined alone today and he was speculating on the value of the Melrose properties. He estimated the figure at about a million. This brought the conversation around to the operation of the place as a single unit and that led him to remark that Dan became a proud papa again last week, making the fourth child brought forth by his wife although he claims parenthood of but the last 3. What a pretty kettle of fish.

Coffee this morning was swallowed almost unremarked by the hostess, for Celeste had just been advised by Miss Julie Prudhomme that she wasn't sure as yet whether she ought to have her house on the tour or not -- the old Lestan Prudhomme home, as some people had larger houses than hers, etc. etc. The pamphlets are supposed to go to press this week-end, and both Miss Julie and Madam Beaufort still can't make up their minds. I must say in this instance, I can't blame Celeste for having a headache.

The artist came to see me this morning. Obviously she was as happy as a clam. She had just rounded up an electric fan the day before and said she enjoyed it so much that last night when she set out to paint, she was so tired she thought she would work only from 6 until 9 but she enjoyed the fam so much she kept right a-moseyin' along until after 11. With almost the pride of a child she asked me if I dind't want to come over some time to see the new acquisition. I said I was entranced at the prospect and I accordingly streaked across the fields this afternoon to take a gander. The sky was cloudless but a 10 mile breeze from the southeast made the temperature very pleasant. I found the artist sitting n her front gallery, knitting busily and looking as cool as a cucumber, what with a crisp starched white dress and her legs and feet ~~free~~ free from any such encumbrances as stockings and shoes. I admired the fan, which is an ordinary one, about a foot in diameter, and probably a dozen years old. She explained that she scarcely needs it on in the daytime but is looking forward ~~anxiously~~ ~~anxiously~~ to turning it on along about first dark. I haven't a doubt the likeness of an electric fan will begin creeping into her paintings before another week has rolled 'round.



Friday, September 9th, 1955.

Our ideal cotton picking weather continues and the Weather Bureau says it looks like the same thing straight ahead for the next 4 or 5 days.

[illegible]



7565

On turning the page, I discover that not only is there a Denholme margin to be corrected but a balky ribbon to be looked into. I am sorry for the blank space that developed so unexpectedly and so unsuspectingly. As the paragraph in question, however, was devoted to nothing of interest, I pray you not to strain your eyes attempting to decipher it.

In the realm of unusual colloquialisms, I heard one today that was new to me which I wanted to share with you, it is so odd. A man was speaking of how busy he has been of late, picking cotton and all, and declared:

"I've been so busy I guess I couldn't have opened my mouth to cuss a cat without getting it full of hair."

Secretaries seem busy, too, although in reality they are probably finding comparatively easy money for the honkey-tonk in the work they have to do in the cotton patch and the lure of the jute box appears to be too great for some of them to bother with extra-9ainful employment so far as reading mail is concerned at the close of day. But in spite of this, I am still provided with sufficient help and let one gentle shower descend on the cotton and I shall be inundated with porf erred aid. And this reminds me that I wanted to inquire about one point touched on in your recent letter. There was an interruption just at the point where you remarked that you would like to have or would not like to have one of the African plates with the mural notation on it. I am under the impression you said you could use one but in waiting for a new batch of cardboards for shipping material, I find that in view of the interruption, I can't be sure about the point and so if you will advise me on the matter, I shall be delighted to be guided accordingly as the new cardboards arrived today and all is in order.

And in pursuance of your thoughtfulness regarding the subscription of Life, may I say that something in the nature of advertising material came to hand today in the second class mail but as the envelope contained a card that looks as though it might have something to do with subscription data, I am enclosing it herewith, although I am uncertain as to whether or not it is in any way relative to the Life subscription itself.

After enclosing Dora's letter in yesterday's post, the thought came to me that his reference to one "Bill Storm" indicated certain impatience with the lady. I'm wondering if this was pure imagination on my part, beginning to operate only after having put aside the letter long since. It would appear this week end may be quiet in these parts, I hope, and may it be precisely in the same manner at Lyme.....

7566

Sunday, September 11th, 1955.

Memorandum:

A quiet week end with a sunny Saturday and a showery Sunday. A cold wave, heading this way, rolled over Oklahoma City at noon on Saturday but fortunately it got stalled at Fort Worth on Saturday evening and blew itself out at that point, after which it began retreating Northward and so we had but a half inch of the rain which might have been measured in inches, had the atmospheric battle gone differently.

Everything seems lovely across the fence. Tonight the ladies are attending a Living Rosary, whatever that is, at the church across the river and plans for the impending week seem to be heavy with road running.

Following coffee on Saturday morning, I was busy re-potting freesias, when Celeste appeared to say she had forgotten to ask me if I would go with her to a place specializing in tombstones in Alexandria early on Wednesday morning. I told her I would go. She hopes to find a marble bench to place somewhere or other near the side steps of her front gallery. I have long wanted to prow around a marble sales place and this will provide me with just the opportunity although I doubt if I shall find a marble sorrow for which I have long been looking. Still there's always a chance one might stumble over a broken urn or some such that an unimaginative dealer had cast aside as valueless.

With the full heat of summer subsiding, the usual scuffles that often bob up at such times would seem pretty unlikely but one exploded in the store on Saturday afternoon when the place was crowded with plantation residents. The participants were two ladies, --Dowreatha, the cook, and Maggie Williams, sister of Dooley who got into store breaking difficulties a while back. It seems that Dowreatha has been suspecting that her husband, Ezra, has been courtting Maggie, on the side, as it were and Saturday in the height of the afternoon rush, the two contestants for Ezra's affections, encountered each other for the first time in months, whereupon Dowreatha sprang on Maggie and had her on



7567

the cement floor before Maggie knew what had struck her. But the many customers pulled the ladies apart in twinkling and hustled them both off in different directions. Tears of rage were still cascading down Dowreatha's cheeks at supper time, a certain fury, I suppose, that interference had prevented her from giving Maggie a thorough drubbing. And how Maggie was feeling, I know not, as she had vanished to her home, her several children and August, her husband.

At first dark this evening, while Celeste was getting rigged up for Church, Madam Regard took the opportunity of being alone to tell me that Sally Hertzog had told her that the Alexandria Town Talk reported that the Dan Henrys has a son, --their fourth child, although the husband claims it is only the third, so far as he is concerned. Madam Regard said further that a few days ago, the wife of an Alexandria physician telephoned Celeste, explaining that her husband was Mrs. Dan Henry's physician, and asked if she and her husband might make an appointment for a Melrose tour and that Celeste had said: "But No!" As a decision to such a request does not fall within Celeste's province, I am rather surprised to hear about her assumption of the prerogative in this instance.

I got off a letter to the State Welfare Board in Baton Rouge, enclosing an 8 or 10 page symposium on the crying need of Louisiana for a Co-ordinator of needs for the Blind in the Talking Book section. Rumor has it that the Welfare Department had more funds on its hands than it knew what to do with and as I have long felt that the office of Coordinator would serve an excellent purpose, I took the opportunity to make the recommendation. My agents had reported some time back that the Federal and State officials in informal discussion had been asking each other if it was thought possible that Yucca resident's services might be secured if such a job should be created. Naturally, I made no reference to that matter but the outline for the job submitted may or may not be just what answer they have been looking for, so far as needs are concerned, and the hint is patent that Yucca might be available. I believe that appropriations for this year have been closed but it's fun working on a long range project anyway.....

7568

Monday, September 12th, 1955.

Memorandum: Sunshine all day but of the filtered variety which did little to reduce the humidity which is high. But cloudless skies are promised for the morrow and so we shall probably be drying up along about tomorrow morning.

Five pilgrims arrived unannounced today. They were interesting because they so obviously were characters out of almost any pulp magazine story. They were two couples and a little girl. One of the women, --the four grown-ups were sort of thirty-ish, had been here before, a charming woman who had made the mistake of accepting unsympathetic companions as the only way she could make a return visit, probably. Her husband was a five cent cigar of the first water. There was nothing here to interest him except the timber in the ancient buildings. The other woman was beautiful and beautiful dressed and just as dumb as she was beautiful. Her husband, however, was a person of some culture but too much whiskey be-fogged his brain. The three year old tot was a three year old tot. Period.

To be kind to the kind woman and treat her associates as they deserved wasn't easy. What an assortment for the nic person to be saddled with. The last time I had such a set-up was in the case of a college youth who probably could make a second visit only if he persuaded members of his family that they, too, would find the trip interesting. As we walked to the front gate on that occasion I remarked to him how personalities can effect impressions. He said this was his first realization that unsympathetic souls could have such devastating effect upon what he a short time before had learned was really fine. How blind are those who will not see; how flat they can make the sweetest potion, merely by being.

It's always so nice to be able to turn to a dab of gardening after such contacts. And tonight I might turn to my Reading Machine if the Library had sent me nothing but rances Parkinson Keyes: "Steak and Potato" which sometime tells me makes the radio hold more promise of entertainment. And I never tire of re-reading Le Petit Prince, and for personal records, such gaps in Library service were just made.



7569

Wednesday, September 13th, 1955

It's always pleasant to hear from Mrs. Stirling, even though she hasn't anything in particular to pass along. I was amused at the clipping she enclosed, what with everyone knowing that John Prudhomme's wife was simply in a fury when she shot him. The only thing accidental about it was that instead of hitting him in the heart she punctured the lung, stomach and kidney sections instead and that is such a record that she may even be a little proud of that for all I know.

Last night I fiddled around in the ether waves, trying to tack down the radio version of "Meet the Press" which, I am told, has resumed its programs on TV and probably has also started radio broadcasts, too, but I couldn't find it on any of the National stations between 9 and 10 o'clock as was formerly the case. Station WHO, Des Moines, used to re-broadcast the program on Monday nights around 10:30 and I shall do a bit of fishing in that direction tonight, for I like the program.

interrutopn...

And that was a telephone call from New Orleans, and a chat with the newly weds and la Storm. They seem to be as gay as kittens and I tried to make it clear to la Storm that she and Irma and Farley, if coming to see me in October, would do well to avoid the week-end of the 15th and 16th. I have always felt they travel on schedules that are determined by nothing at all except the whim of the moment and are inclined to be utterly unimaginative as regards the possibility that anybody else might have routines and schedules that aren't so easily manipulated as theirs, if, indeed, they have any at all. I need not tell you that Louis XIV is one of my pet heroes but I don't mind repeating that one reason for my admiration stems from the fact that he was always so considerate about everyone's time, seeing to it for half a century that the following day's schedule would always be posted the night before, thereby giving everyone a maximum of opportunity to adjust their own programs accordingly.

J. H. went to Baton Rouge and New Orleans today with Bill McGinnis, on his business and personal friends, --as a matter of fact, Bill was one of a party of four who visited Mexico at the time of the Illingworth post card. It is my understanding that after losing her job in Alexandria, la bag betook herself to Baton Rouge and that may explain a couple of things. So the world turns and so do I turn to Le Petit Prince and then, I hope, to Invitation to Learning or ra Meet the Press.....

7570

Tuesday, September 13th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Recalling your own experience a while back, I think I need not explain why I am feeling tonight not unlike "La Troisième Jeunesse de Madame Prune". The fact is that I have been fiddling all day in paint pots and while, as you have realized over and over again, it isn't the painting that kills but the hubbub and confusion, the moving of incalculable impedimenta, the pull and hauling, that really is the thing getting one down. My big concentration was on a section of the bath room which long needed a going over and there is vast satisfaction in knowing it has been achieved, but I shall be able to fold up my beard and fall asleep forthwith, requiring nothing in the nature of being "rocked by a cow", as one of our Bopart-am-Rhein acquaintances once had it.

Our splendid weather continues with a promise of five or six days of the same quality. The weather bureau, however, did throw in one reservation or proviso, --if Gilda keeps on the course she is presently maintaining, she will pass slap into the Gulf and then we shall probably be in for a damp-ish week end.

One of my secretaries failed to show up yesterday, --Lee, who is the son of Doreatha and Ezra. His mama came to see me this morning to say that although she had tried to discourage him from doing so, he had struck out for Shreveport to join the Army. I know not if the Army is enlisting people at the moment but in Lee they might get quite a powerful adjunct since he is a muscular boy of 18 and stands somewhere around 6 and a half or seven feet, and rather nearer 7 feet than 6 and a half, I believe.

The artist's grandson, Brother, the Paris green invalid of years back and the same one who had an appendix operation a month or so back, is in the hospital again, this time for a hernia. Brother seems to be one of those impressive examples going to prove that some people do not have all the luck in matters pertaining to health.



7571

I think I should have had some 1st class mail today but I didn't receive any. Last night Dora mentioned having posted a letter Sunday which should certainly be here by now but has arrived. And it is possible that I may be receiving further word from Friend Postell as Ora said she or somebody at the college had just received a most interesting letter from him, arriving in today's post.

It seems that the State Department has asked him to go on to another job of the same sort he is now completing, as of October 8th, on Formosa, --the new job taking him on to Indonesia or some such place.

interruption:

A meandering secretary passed this way, --and thank Heaven for an occasional "spare". I was so glad to get a portion of an envelope made out, --to the Schmidts of Michigan who came here with Ora weeks back. I had heard from them on their return home but was unable to respond to their letter since the hand writing was such that nobody could make out the name of the city precisely and so I tried Grand Ridge, which was about the closest anybody could come to it. But the letter was returned and so Ora wrote to some mutual friends of their in California for the name of the city and they came up with Grand Ledge instead of Grand Ridge. Now surely there can't be very many Grands as part of a city name in any State and I think Uncle Sam's postal boys might have been stirred their imagination a little on that one since Michigan must have a list of all its Post Offices and I doubt if there are many approximating Grand Ridge or Grand Ledge. But in Louisiana they returned a letter I had written with a faulty address, for although I had intended writing Lake Charles, I put down Saint Charles and back it came in a jiffy. That seems to have better cause but the Ridge - Ledge thing is something else again.

I'll be posting this memo at 6 in the morning as Celeste and I are scheduled to explore the Alexandria marble works soon after. I have so many things cooking right here I look forward to the Alexandria jaunt with something less than enthusiasm.....

7572

Wednesday, September 14th, 1955.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your letter in today's post. As I had anticipated, there were several but none, contrary to expectations from Friend Postell. But your nice fat envelope and the thinner ones, are all tucked away safely in the armoire, awaiting the morrow when the secretariat and I, let us hope, have better luck in establishing contact. They, --the secretariat, tried today but half a dozen "must" things got in the way and so I play at Patience until the morrow. And while I have had some experience in that field in regard to in-coming mail, I never seem to master it entirely but there is a wonderful solace, nevertheless, in just knowing that there is an envelope in a familiar hand awaiting me so close at hand.

The day was another of those perfect deep summer ones, warm to the touch and occasional fleecy clouds in a tremendous vault of blue.

We headed down the road at 6:30 this morning and arrived in Alexandria before anything much was stirring and so we drove around to Blythe's and found her working in her garden, rigged out in a strange sort of costume, looking more like a peasant in a Peter Breugel painting than anything else. She seemed entranced to see us, dropped everything naturally and we all had coffee in the sun room and then strolled about in the garden.

Blythe never could seem to get over her surprise at receiving such unexpected guests. She appeared altogether delighted and smacked me twice, indicating that she can be human when surprised, at 1. She said she is flying to New York on October 1st, for a week's stay or so at the Plaza. Paul King has a full schedule for her, I imagine, and she mentioned her intention to see one of the series games, etc. She plans to be back in Louisiana for the Natchitoches pilgrimage, however, which is on the 15th, and, getting closer to home so far as the calendar is concerned, she said she was planning to bring the Pringles to Melrose tomorrow to see the murals. Ho, -- hum... those kindly but tiresome old maids.

When Blythe asked us what in the world we were doing in Alexandria so early in the morning, Celeste told her that I



7573

was looking for a piece of marble and didn't tell her that the reason for the trip was Celeste's hope to find a marble bench for her yard. Astonishingly enough, Blythe went out into the garden, kicked around a little under some vines and brought forth precisely the piece of marble I wanted and put it in the car.

After leaving her, we stopped at a marble shop where the man told me he could engrave the thing the way I wanted it:

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He thought the work could be done for about 2 dollars which seems reasonable and he is to let me know tomorrow. The reason I want the marble is to set it into the Yucca gallery floor, --the brick gallery TEMPORARILY. And the reason I had an "S" in the design rather than the conventional "N", as on all maps, compasses, etc., is because it seems to me the South is just as suitable a direction for Louisiana as forever than eternal "N". Well, we shall see.

But Celeste never did find anything in the marble bench line and finally settled for a cement one, to be made there in the Alexandria area, --rather nearer Boyce, and this in spite of the fact that she could get the same thing in Hatchitoches all made and without fuss and fuming, but she doesn't know that, I'm glad to say, for otherwise I shouldn't have had the trip to the marble shop.

Madam Beaufort has put the tour thing in a tizzy by insisting that if Beaufort is to be on the tour, the plans will have to be reversed so that the thing start at her house rather than here. The natural thing is for the crowd to come down the cement to Melrose and proceed toward town and dinner via Oakland and Beaufort, but she is determined doesn't care how this throws out of joint the plans for the afternoon tour in town. The ladies are fools if they don't tell Beth to sit on a tack and go on with their pre-arranged program. I know not how things will turn out.

After dinner, Teebay brought me a 9 foot panel of cotton pickers which is very pretty and is tacked up temporarily at the end of my bath room. The clerk told me today she had purchased a new twenty five dollar wig last week and I'm all in favor of that. Any gal at 75 with a 40 year old "helper", and the gal being bald, certainly couldn't invest her money to better advantage, don't you think.....

7574

Thursday, September 15th, 1955.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your elegant Saturday letter in the sanctum sanctorum of the armoire today and thus to be able to have such a fine chat.

It is so good of you to keep me abreast with how things turn, up town and down town, at home and abroad.

And may I thank you particularly for giving me such a comprehensive set-up of how things operate in the field of business. Between now and the first of the year, I am going to hold fast to the thought that your associates will at long last get some realization of what a jewel they have in little Miss Lee and that adjustments both in the field of remuneration and assistance, will be forthcoming before 1955 has played out. Of course the contemporary world has always puzzled that Mozart, for example, got such a raw deal, but there are millions of little Mozarts all over the place. Surely it must be ever so evident to those who slave for great corporations in order that the officials can announce semi-annual dividends of pleasing proportions to the stock holders that it is just such practices that eventuate in the impulse to form bigger and tighter unions to threaten strikes if such inequities aren't corrected. Let us hope you can get a little light let into the somewhat unimaginative skulls of those who control the purse strings of the money bags, small enough in dimensions, that hold the salaries for those on whose brains and industry the great organizations do function at a profit ---for the stock holders.

I love your account of the antics of your little feathered friend. Had you thought of playing he is a falcon and tying string on his leg, letting him ride on your arm when taking a stroll through the Botanical Gardens. Only just be sure the chord is stout one, for I remember a family named Geifes who spent one interminable Sunday from noon until midnight, frantically chasing from bush to tree and tree to bush around and around Central Park when their pet canary got out of his cage when he had been transported to the park for a dab of sunshine and the sight of some greenery.

Thanks, too, for giving me so many interesting side lights on the situation of our girl friend beyond the Rhine. It is heartening to know things seem a little more tranquil. Surely it must be wonderfully helpful for peace that there isn't such a posse all living together and on top of each other.



7575

That you should have recognized certain characters on the Tin Roof would seem to indicate that the play has caught some fundamentals alright. I am expecting the next explosion from up Shreveport way when October 15th arrives and the daughter of the house blows in to up set the apple cart when her sister-in-law and her assistants are receiving. That ought to make quite a fine show, too, I should imagine.

As for the South of the border business, it all seems as incredible as some of the performances I report from down this way. But thank Heaven for Providence, as it were, for at least the latter eradicates a few visitations, I hope.

I think I have mentioned the Beaufort rumpus currently injected into the tour thing. As up to now, Madam Beaufort is adamant about having the tour start with her house on the threat that if her wishes aren't complied with, she will withdraw her house from the tour. Oddly enough, she doesn't seem to realize that everybody would be perfectly enchanted if she did. Thus far everyone is holding to the point that the original plan be adhered to, with the tour starting at Melrose and proceeding toward town from this most southerly point. Frankly, I think there will be hundreds of pilgrims who will not arrive in Natchitoches for the 9 a.m. start, and my guess is that many of them will be trickling down this way all during Saturday and Sunday. But I shall be glad to have the major wave sweep over us early in the morning, since it is the initial assault that will be the heaviest and will require the most people on the receiving line. I have always thought that among the better battles that could be staged would be between Beth and Sister as they both are possessed of the same mental instability. Neither lady can stand the other and also both are possessed of about the same amount of immeasurable nervous and physical energy, they ought to end up in a Gingham dog and Calico cat scuffle, after which no trace could be discovered of either.

This afternoon Mary Pringle and her sister came to see me while Blythe had Clemence at the camp scrubbing floors. They are tiresome people but I listened with attention to Mary's unending prattle and found myself interested in a 150 acre gourd farm she visited at Downey, California during the summer. She described each one of several seemingly thousands of varieties and told me about one of the biggest in the world. Finally she wanted to go over to the African House to see the murals and when passing the Yucca gallery, she caught sight of some of the local gourds of some what greater dimensions than she had elaborated upon, she nearly fell out and I had trouble suppressing giggles in my beard.....

7576

Friday, September 16th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Our deep summer days continue, wonderfully sunny in spite of pretty big white clouds decorating the horizon all around. But temperatures in the 90's at noon day tone down to about 70 at midnight and that makes resting easy.

Such weather is mighty poor for trimming rose bushes but cut and prune I did today, being constantly reminded of my endeavors as I tap at these keys, what with an occasional thorn lingering on in my fingers. By some stroke of good luck, the pilgrims have been mighty scarce during this past week, enabling me to get on with my efforts without constant interruptions. I figure I might as well make the most of this break in the parade, however, as people will again be on the move, I am sure, for nobody gets out of the habit of road running and although a prolonged week end like Labor Day may satisfy them for a week or two, still the old urge will be triumphing again shortly, egged on, no doubt, by the impending articles that will appear about the murals, perhaps this week or next, and then the publicity attending the Natchitoches tour.

Speaking of the latter, Carmen telephoned me today to say that John Kyser had taken up the matter with Mr. Ogden of the Dixie-Rote of the Picayune and an article will appear in that sheet within the next three weeks, I believe. I shall advise you on that point when the date has been determined, but it will be within about 3 weeks from this coming Sunday, I believe.

Carmen also reported that bids will be let on November 16th for the new bridge across Red River at Grand Ecote, serving much North South traffic, and as specifications call for it to run from the top of the bluff to the lower lands on the opposite shore, I suppose this will represent a major bridge building job, what with the span probably running from one half to a mile in length



7577

In the last letter from little Miss Lee, I was glad that she, too, had noted what I thought I had detected in Dora's last letter,-- a return to the old gaiety which somehow had been absent since he kicked the dust of Norman from his boots. Isn't it heartening to find the pulse is back in the old swing of things. And from the enclosed letter, if you haven't already run through it, you will note that he continues more or less in the same vein. I did intend mentioning in a recent letter that his reference to one "Bill Storm" sounded as though there might be a note of annoyance in it. Perhaps I did mention it, perhaps not, and perhaps he did so unwittingly convey a sensation and perhaps he had none such.

What he has to say about Carolyn having more irons in the fire than ever is so true. It is her primary weakness, I think, always biting off more than she can chew. In a way there is a parallel between her and Celeste in that both are forever on the gallop, but the parallel ends right there, for Celeste is forever going no where and invariably reaching precisely that point and nobody, including herself is interested. Carolyn, on the other hand, usually has something interesting, cooking but most of the stuff never jells because she can't keep up with all the pots she has put on the stove to simmer. If Carolyn would once and for all decide to farm or write or paint or photograph or write articles or write books or write movie scripts or lumber or raise cattle or plant cotton or something, and, having decided on one thing, then decide where she wants to do the same, and stay put, she might get some where, but in trying to do everything everywhere, she is forever and always will arrive at no point satisfying to herself. I know not what she plans for this winter but I understand the winter is to be spent at Old Bonita, in Africa and cruising in the South Seas, --Indoesia or some such. Any one of these three would appear sufficient for the majority of people but she will make plans for all three and probably realize none of them but rather end up in the West Indies or the Canadian Rockies. She is wearing herself out wonderfully fast, I think, and apparently enjoying it. As for myself, I prefer rusting out in some spot and so avoiding all the endless hurly burly.

The Hughes letter, and its address, came as a surprise, although it shouldn't have. Within the year, they have given up their Little Rock home, built a new one in Florida and sold it, bought a house in New Orleans and sold it and moved to Lake Charles and bought a house, and now have moved again to New Orleans. They certainly are kind people but they do fall into the category of pure sights. I hold the thought that a quiet week end impends at Lyme.....

7578

Sunday, September 18th, 1955.

Memorandum: The week end weather has been so pleasant, I have found myself constantly hoping the same sort of thing might be obtaining about Lyme, -- gobs of sunshine and blue sky with elegant big old puffy clouds, white as cotton and as round as a boll. There were pilgrims today that were shunted away, I believe, but Dr. and Mrs. Augarella from town and some people from Eldorado Arkansas somehow got through.

Sunday dinner was a pain in the neck with Celeste arguing with J. H. and Pat about Cane River aristocrats, and as Celeste was fighting the fight for those who are simply darling, --Mat Hertzog, Vernon Cloutier, etc., and as J. H. and Pat were talking about people who did not have acquisitive powers, the arguments, like the majority of them, was divided in such a way that neither side was talking about the same thing and ended up by Celeste saying some very unpleasant things about Henry manners and absence of sensitivity, and withal convincing in her stridence, what with the demonstration she made throughout of having mighty poor manners and no sensitivity at all.

In Saturday's post came a fruit cake from Miss Maa, --but of a type I hadn't encountered before. It was a two layer business made of delicious white stuff, a little heavier than angel food, and the toppe all shellaced over with stuff looking like a fruit cake and be-spattered with pecanes, cherries, orange spice and Heaven knows what all. It was really delicious, and I shall sample it again tonight before folding up my beard.

Last night I did a dab of Saturday night reading, still with "The Roosevelts of Sagamore Hill". I got to the part where Theodore, Vice President of the United States, was with his family in the Adirondacks, when word came through that President McKinley had been shot. I had forgotten the details about the Vice President being summoned to Buffalo where he remained for three days until the doctors had pronounced the President out of danger, and then how T. R. had returned to his family and together they had moved on to some remote fastness, miles from anywhere, including telegraph whires,



7579

3891, 4781, 7420, 7421, 7422

and how almost impossible it had been for the officials in Buffalo had found it to get in touch with T. R. when McKinley died and T. R. was expected to step into his shoes. Hagedorn did nothing editorially about this but it struck me as mighty poor judgement on the part of T. R., under the circumstances, to be-take himself to such a wilderness when things in Buffalo were in the state they were. I always thought the children of T. R. were a mighty raucous bunch, probably never controlled, which always seemed a little paradoxical when one thinks of the highly developed imaginative powers of T. R., and mind must have always jumped in other directions than imagining how the harum-scarum antics of his offspring might effect others. I suppose my impatience with that family must stem from the comparative quiet of my own nature which somehow would have always clashed with their rip roaring go at things. If, for most people, as the poet has suggested, "Life is a song", -- "Let's sing it together", -- for the T. R. family, "Life is a brass band" all banging together, and the Lord help anyone trying to maintain any other tune along side.

Saturday's post brought the enclosures which speak for themselves. Isn't it odd that Friend Miller complains of the loneliness of hotel life in Marlin, Texas, when her sisters and nephews and nieces are all clamoring for her to make her home with them in California.. Incidentally, why Marlin, Texas was ever hit upon as a place of residence, I never could imagine, since Dr. Miller knew nobody in the place and yet didn't want to be lonely. After all, she does know lots of people in Shreveport, Natchez and Alexandria where she might have lived in a hotel, too, if she wished and could have gone riding endlessly, as she loves to do, with her friends in any or all of those places.

The Ferriday letter is from an ex-hill billy woman, -- Floribel, I believe is her name, and what a name, who passed this way a week or so back. She took pride in saying she had attained by the 7th grade so far as her schooling went, which must supply her with the required feeling of superiority which she needs. Poor thing, just as kind as she knows how to be, but just as tiresome as many a 7th grader. Somehow I sense the impending week is going to be a busy one, although I can't think why, but nevertheless I am delighted to have had such a quiet week end which may have been Miss Lee's, too, I hope

1827

7580

Monday, September 19th, 1955.

Memorandum:

find it interesting to observe how the news is handled by the commentators, especially on days when there doesn't seem much for them to work on and even more so when there seems to be a bountiful supply.

Somehow today's batch suggested the possibility of quite a field day for the gentlemen of the ether waves and yet I was surprised to notice how little E. Roscoe Murrow did with hurricanes Hilda and Ione, the revolution in Argentina and the lynching trial in Mississippi, and how much space he devoted to farm prices as a 1956 political issue. He did refer to the hurricanes, of course, and to the Peron thing but never made a peep about the lynching business in Mississippi. In a way that seems a little odd.

As for the first day of the trial at Sumner, Miss., the most impressive thing coming to the surface was the declaration on the part of the "prosecutor" that he wouldn't ask for the death penalty since so much of the case rested on the circumstantial. He might just as well have said he was going to do any prosecuting. Something tells me we are going to hear a heap of talk for a long time about this trial and the way it is going to be conducted. I must drop Dora a line to give a bit of stir to his interest in the matter.

Our lovely summer weather continues with a high in the mid 90's today and the promise of a pleasant 72 tonight. I suppose it is still in the 80's at this writing and I'm delighted I have some Tender Leaf awaiting my attention later on.

After the mail is finished, I want to take a little look at William O. Douglas: "Almanac of Liberty", which came to hand today. From the title, I assume this may be a series of essays on man's progression from whatever to now and as I like Mr. Douglas and his other writings, I am in a frame of mind to enjoy this item, too. I believe I heard on the radio the other day that he is touring



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Russia or has been so doing this past summer. Of all the Supreme Court Justices, he must get around more than any of his associates.

From Maa Mahiers today came some fruit cake and it looks good. What I like about it is its timely arrival for in recent years it would seem to me that Christmas week arrives and a million people deluge one with fruit cakes until one could die at merely glancing in their direction. And so with this one coming to hand in September, it would seem as though one might really get an opportunity to enjoy it a little before one finds himself bogged down in mountains of others. It was such a generous bit of baking that I should never have rounded up the whole thing before I had stuffed myself like a humming bird on butterfly lily honey, and so I have cut off a little slab and am sending it along to little miss Lee, thinking she might enjoy sampling the same, even as I, in this pre-holiday period. I suppose it should come to hand about the time this letter does, or perhaps a mail or two later.

I am looking forward with great satisfaction to Sunday dinner this next week end for Celeste told me today she is so busy she doesn't know which way to turn, what with having to go to the beauty parlor for a hair and finger do and then to the dentist to have her teeth cleaned etc., etc., and all before Friday when she takes off for New Iberia to attend the Sugar Festival. I suppose there will be dancing either in or off the street, and that, of course, is always something that comes mighty close to being next to Heaven. I had never thought of it before but I assume that indicates why Melrose leaves her cold, --no dancing in the streets. What a pity we don't have streets, for then, what with a dab of dancing organized, everything would be perfectly darling.

I haven't as yet finished The Roosevelts of Sagamore Hill and think I shall let this Hagedorn opus rest a little. I had forgotten about the parents of the young Roosevelts permitting their offspring to ake their pet animals to Washington with them, including their pet snakes, and how the children used to walk into Presidential conferences, with two or three snakes coiling about their persons, with no protests whatsoever from their papa. That is where T.R. was so wrong, I think, since he certainly must have had imagination enough to know that lots of grown ups doing business with him at the White House would have found it quite disagreeable to have his kids dumping snakes into their laps. Surely the F. D. R. children seem pretty mild in retrospect when contrasted with the doings of thier Oyster Bay cousins.....

0827

7582

Tuesday, September 20th, 1955.

Memorandum:

The Weather Bureau says it is unusually hot for this time of the year and I believe they have somet ing there. It was in the upper 90's today and tonight I have an electric fan just a-whizzin' for all it is worth.

The postman present me with a few post cards and letters today but as none of the secretaries put in an appearance, I have everything tucked away in the armoire awaiting a other go round.

I had assumed there might be a report from that Marshall woman but nothing turned up until about 5 o'clock when the telephone rang and she reported she was in Baton Rouge and hoped to pass this way en route to Texas either tonight or on the morrow. I shd l be glad to get any news that may be forthcoming concerning the impending newspaper publication dates on the murals and, what with the weather being fair, it would be good if we could get some gourd pictures before the green of the banana plants begin to put in an occasional yellow leaf.

I saw J. H. for a few minutes at the Post Office at 9 this morning. He was in Memphis last week and said the cotton crop, while mighty poor in Louisiana, seems to be excellent in the Delta country. He said the Chambers of Commerce in Alexandria had just been worrying him about leaving right away for New Orleans to sit in on some business with Ezra Taft Benson this afternoon and tonight when at dinner, the Secretary will be dined at Antoine's.

J. H. is a staunch supporter of Benson agricultural policies which may be one reason why J. H.'s presence is wanted to join this most eminent of the twelve Apostles of the Mormon Church. I don't know why it should seem odd that Mormons should be so prominent in national politics but somehow it always strikes me that way. Heaven knows they run their own Church and business organizations with wonderful success and since the Eisenhower is a business rather than a political Administration I guess the right people are in the high places where business and not people are the first order of business at polical meetings.



7583

Last night I got around to read a little from the Douglas Almanac of Liberty and found it to my liking. The subject matter is to my liking, as it enumerates one episode, skillfully condensed, of a struggle for liberty on the part of this or that man or group of men, each episode seemingly construed in such a fashion as would but cover a printed page, I should imagine. The book begins with July 4th, 1776, which seems fitting for such a book for an American public and take succeeding days throughout the year, --July 5th, 6th, 7, 8th and so on, although I believe not every day in the calendar is covered. And thus far the book has dealt primarily with episodes in various aspects of the struggle in American settings although one or two European ones were given a day or two in what little I explored last night. I find the idea good and am wondering if any of these essays appeared in newspapers or magazines. The work is copyrighted by William O. Douglas and unlike most books, thus read, no publisher is mentioned, so this may or may not be the first time they have appeared in print. I might add that enjoyment of the book, quite aside from its own merits, is because your friend, Alexander Scourby, does the reading and of course he could sit down and start reading the telephone directory and it would tinkle pleasantly in anybody's ear.

I smiled to myself today when, at the coffee hour, Celeste told me that there wasn't any use of letting the pilgrims on October 15th, explore the upper floor of the big house. I hope I smiled only to myself, however, for she nearly had a fit when the tour matter first came up when I suggested that there was such a variety of things to be seen at Melrose, in contrast to other places, that in view of the time element involved, there would be no point in showing the upper floor. And so she went ahead and had the sofas, chairs and footstools in the living room on the upper floor sent to the proper shop in town to have the covered with new slip covers although those already in use were in perfectly adequate condition, I thought. And now that nobody is going upstairs anyway, that gesture seems a little pointless, it seems to me. When she remarked that the ladies would serve dinner for the pilgrims at the Lemee House, I suggested that she negotiate with some good local restaurant for a percentage on the dinners sold and turn over the several hundred people to an institution already equipped to handle such matters. She couldn't see that at all, but now everyone is wondering how several hundred people can be given dinner in a house that at best is small-small. But such little problems fade into insignificance when one contemplates the impending week end, dancing in the streets of New Iberia at the Sugar Festival and all.....

7584

Wednesday, September 21st, 1955.

Memorandum:

I never did see J. H. today although he returned from the Besson meeting in New Orleans some time during the night and was probably about all day. I was vaguely amused at breakfast when Eugene, the clerk, told me that J. H. had remarked this morning that he was one of but three Democrats present at the Antoine dinner, all the others being Republican. As J. H., during recent Presidential elections has voted for Landon, Wilke, Dewey and Eisenhower, just how good a Democrat he is may be a matter of opinion.

Carolyn arrived from Baton Rouge around 10 and had much to report about "the children" in St. Ann Street, where everything seems to be rocking along wonderfully well. There were five or six dinners with them and a trip to Franklin, La., and the meeting of Aunt Willie at the plane, etc. It seems that the husband now drives the car and pays for the dinners from his own pocket, which sounds rather on the better side.

He continues manifesting interest in the camera and I wrote him today, suggesting he go ahead on the mechanical study of the camera and after mastering it, devote that technical knowledge to bringing out a book, based on his artistic powers, the volume to be a pictorial rendition of his earlier magnum opus, "Ziba".

I further suggested that after the "Ziba" had been completed in an even more imaginative manner than anything Clarence John had undertaken, that he attempt a second photographic book to appear under some such title as

"That's Where My Heart....."

the title borrowed from a phrase of Stephen Collins Foster in his old favorite song, beginning:

"Way down upon the Swanee River, far, far way, --  
That's where my heart is ever pining, etc., etc."

My thought is that since his girl friend, little Miss Hunter, pants by heart, as it were, he might do a profound photographic



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study of the lady at her various types of endeavor and particularly her painting, including reproductions of some of her paintings, including the murals and the photographic likenesses of some of the people now living on the plantation who figure in her paintings. I remarked that this ought to take much time and that it was a pity there wasn't one unit of the envisioned buildings on Arenbourg which might devoted to his project.

I devoted much of my day to giving Carolyn a hand in getting pictures. This morning we got Oakland where Alphonse and Lucille Prudhomme received us very kindly. But typical of the Prudhommes of the present generation, Lucille said, apropos of nothing while talking to me, as Carolyn was doing the photographic work on the avenue of oaks, that there would be no charge if Carolyn and I cared to drop in a view the house. That floored me. When, I should like to know have neighbors charged each other for visits. I declined with thanks and we went on to get pictures in town. The sky was a dark blue and the clouds wonderfully luminous and white, making splendid background for such shots as that of the statue of Uncle Jack, the columns on the college campus and backgrounds for the Lemee House from the rear and the Leopold Levy house from the front. Back home before dinner, we devoted the afternoon to getting shots for a gourd story. I suspended gourds from the eaves of the African House and rounded up various negroes to appear in the picture as engages in hanging up the various types, and the people included Clemence, Peter, the ogers boy and one of the Sapps, and some of them appeared in additional shots under the banana leaves in front of Yucca, etc.

What with people in the fields and people in the fields somewhat remoter and people working at the gin and Miss Hunter just naturally getting lost regardless, my efforts were far flung but successful in the eventual round-up. The pictures were taken in color, everybody doing something or other with gourds, and I believe the results of the afternoon efforts may turn out as satisfactory as I am sure those taken during the morning were.

Just as I was going to wash up before supper, little Miss Irma Somperyac Willard appeared. She had driven up to Melrose from Alexandria to bring me some photographs and only discovered on arriving that she had left them in Alexandria. I was glad she and Carolyn could talk a little before her departure on the wings of first dark. It seems la Willard has something to do about some Children's Art meeting by regional groups in Alexandria on the 22nd and as Carolyn plans a movie on that subject, the ladies could rig up appointments prior to that date to dove-tail their respective aces for the grinding. And so turned the day and I think I shall not require rocking to get me to sleep tonight. I have a feeling

7586

Re: Archives

Thursday, September 22nd, 1955.

Memorandum:

It's raining, a hot, sprinkling kind of rain and what with the thermometer remaining abnormally high, the humidity inclines to be oppressive.

The day's in-coming post held a lot of stuff of little interest but incoming mail, regardless of its source, invariably has an element of pleasure in it.

A card from Harry and Dell Chalkley indicates they have been doing Italy. Like so many other people we know, they certainly do turn up in the most unexpected places.

A package from Dora also came to hand, --two pairs of perfect lovely woolen pants of which I haven't the slightest need but which he-stirs me to round up a flock of moth balls for I'm sure the moths can find lots of things to do with such material. There is also a pair of black shoes which I need not and a box of cigars which strike me as being particularly funny. Poor Dora, making such nice gestures.....

Carolyn got off for a conference in Shreveport but not before I had stirred up a new job for her, I think. Governor Kennon's confidential secretary is among the "associates" of Robert Butcher, Associates, the concern which is making the movies for which Carolyn is writing the scripts. Many of these movies have been appearing on TV programs and seem to be receiving favorable comment.

Before Carolyn left, I told her to be-stir herself next week while in Baton Rouge by having the confidential secretary make an appointment for her with the Governor. As she has had considerable contacts with that Executive and as he apparently is pleased with the words she has put in his mouth for the scripts, it should be as easy as pie for her to point out to him that the Kennon policies can have a good chance of being projected into succeeding Administrations if the good



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ventures he has inaugurated are given publicity in national magazines, beginning forthwith so that they are well under way by the time the new Administration takes over, it being remembered that in Louisiana, a man cannot be re-elected to the Governor's chair. The Governor should have it pointed out that the job which Lyle held down for a year or two just before his death, should be re-activated at about \$6,000.00 a year and assigned to one of the Departments, so that it could function along without political interference with changing Administrations. The Department of Commerce and Industry would be the logical one but since national magazine will not touch anything from such a department, the job should fall into the category of the Library, with the job functioning concurrently with that institution but quite independently of it, merely using its archives for material to prepare for the national magazines the messages that are now being televised for merely Louisiana consumption. The time element in re-activating this job is pressing, first because it should be functioning as soon as possible before election and secondly, and the Governor mustn't know this, before Essae Mae gets back from her current vacation which she is taking with my friend, Lois Lester, so that the thing will be signed and sealed and wrapped up while the coast is clear, and once achieved, it can scarcely be altered. The annual salary ought to carry the holder of same so far as expenses of living are concerned and all the magazine stuff, newspaper articles, etc., not to mention movies of an educational nature, can supply the gravey. It sounds like a pretty good deal, if the thing can be effected and it seems to me the set up is just about as near perfect for such an attempt as could ever be contrived. And so Carolyn went on her way, bubbling over with the enthusiasm welling up in the mind of a traveler in the dark, suddenly catching the gleam of one small candle, which is enough, and I can go on to the ordered tenor of my ways

A colored nurse, sort of 50-ish, came to see me today. She is in the Welfare Section, supervising mid wives throughout the State a little difficulty making out Madam Marco's letter but finally got through it. I gather Hatchez isn't writing her too often, either, which is a pity. The letter from the air force youthspeak for itself. He is the son of my barber and formerly lived in "tooleedo", Ohio. And now for a go at the mail and then a dab of William O. Douglas and some Tender Leaf.....

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7588

Friday, September 23rd, 1955.

Memorandum:

Three and a half inches of rain this afternoon did not tend to lessen yesterday's humidity and what with the promise for more rain tonight and tomorrow, it looks like a fairly dampish week end.

But the presence of the rain which probably just about finished off what remains of the cotton crop in the field, was not without its advantages to me since it gave me an opportunity to set Will Rogers to work, moving some shelves and putting some finishing touches on new arrangements in my bath room and it goes without saying one feels marvelously compensated for such efforts and getting the domestic scene "all set", regardless on energies requisite thereunto.

I notice that E. Roscoe Wurrow got around to mention the Money murder in Mississippi and the result of the Sumner trial tonight. That the murderers were set free seems to have surprised nobody since everyone who had mentioned the case had supposed the verdict would be precisely what it was. After all, a jury of Nazis trying one of their own members for the murder of a Jew would be expected to free the accused and the same set of circumstances is in operation in Mississippi when a flock of hill billies get ready to decide on a matter concerning one of their own kind versus a negro. I guess the thing that ranks next to the prize understatement of the year, as Secretary Hobbs's remark about one anticipating a demand for polio vaccine, is the declaration of the man who was supposed to be prosecuting a attorney who pointed out that the murder was "a cowardly act". One must find it equally obvious that the speaker is a cowardly actor, too.

I must telephone my friend, the Rev. Wilson, Episcopalian rector of Hatchitoches and learn how the Greenville paper



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have been handling the trail as the Rev. Wilson subscribes to the Carter paper and usually keeps me abreast with its positions on this or that subject.

On the Louisiana political scene, the gubernatorial candidates are beginning to get warmed up a little in anticipation of the January primaries. Of the half dozen thus far in the race, only Earl Long has a chance, I think, although I do believe he could be beaten, not by Mayor Morrison of New Orleans, one of the better men in the race, but by Jimmy Davis purely on the grounds of Jimmie's ability to croon hill billy tunes which seems to be all that is required to recommend a candidate to the electorate. It is my understanding, however, that H. L. Hunt, the world's richest man, of Texas is backing Davis and the Hunt money ought to help.

I read a little more from the Sagamore Hill Roosevelts last night, thinking I would be done with the thing and get it out of the way. I was disappointed that the aut or gave such a bias in his presentation of the T. R. effort to get himself appointed by President Wilson to raise two to four divisions of men and lead them to Europe in 1917. The reason for the Wilson refusal, as presented by Hagedorn, suggests that it was purely political animosity on the part of Wilson as against Roosevelt, which is generally known not to have been the case, I believe. Naturally, Wilson and Roosevelt were too different in personality to have much love for each other and as political opponents in 1912, there couldn't have been too much enthusiasm on the part of either one for the other.

But in the matter of a private citizen of the United States raising an Army, --that of course would be unthinkable to any political or military leader of the 20th century, in view of the hopelessness of unmanageable complications that would arise in matters of command, unified command, supplies, priorities, strategy and so on and so forth, although one might have been able to function in such a fashion in the 11th or 12th century when everything was hurly burly anyway. But although such considerations were made perfectly plain at the time by Wilson and military pig wigs all over the place, nothing such imponderables was mentioned in the Hagedorn book, leading me to believe that Hagedorn, a good writer, must be guilty of writing a "mug" book, probably at the request of or approval of the Sagamore Roosevelts and I think that section of the book lamentable, both as regards the author and the readers, many of whom, since the matter isn't mentioned, would not stop to think of how impossible it would be to have private armies functioning inside or outside the established military household General

7590

Sunday, September 25th, 1955.

Memorandum:

A lovely week end, without any pilgrims and without any rain, a combination that is rare in the extreme.

The big news of Saturday was not local, of course, but rather was centered on Denver. I am sure everyone was amazed to hear of the President's stroke and probably the more disturbed because of the efforts made to play it down by calling it indigestion to begin with and then, when announcing the real trouble, explaining that Mr. Eisenhower walked from his house to the car, taking him to the hospital when, in turn, that was followed up by the statement that four doctors assisted him in getting from the house to the car. I don't know how four people assist a fifth one to walk, for seemingly two would be about all that could do much effectively, but I am not very much up on such matters.

Probably because I am inclined to be slothful by nature, I tend to believe that the campaign of getting one's self elected is enough to kill men, even those younger than Presidential timber. And after attaining the prize, it would seem that the Presidency is a pace that kills. Then toss in a bit of trout fishing, 27 or 28 holes of golf and what surprises me is not the stroke but that one hasn't made itself manifest much earlier.

My instinctive feeling is the Mr. Eisenhower is rather worse off than is reported. One thing is certain, he will not run for a second term. I hope he may not have to relinquish the reins to Mr. Nixon, and I don't know whom the Republicans can name to win the next election although they might have a chance on a candidate in the person of Chief Justice Warren. J. H. says he would like Warren but couldn't stand either Nixon or Stephenson winning the Presidency. This surprised me, for I thought Nixon would be right up J. H.'s alley although I can well understand his dislike of Mr. Stephenson, what with his intellectualism.

Oddly enough, I have never met anybody, Democrat or Republican, who didn't express horror at the thought that Nixon should ever move into the Presidential chair.



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On the home front, I have had a good opportunity this afternoon to turn over in my mind a few possibilities for the formation of a company which may or may not lead to advantages all around. Carolyn telephoned from Marshall that she was shooting some pictures at the Lemee house in town for Mildred Cunningham and the Shreveport Times, asking if I would care to join everybody at Mildred's later. I would not. Carolyn passed this way about dusk dark and I suggested that a company be formed under the title of Panoramics Associates, or some such. The purpose of the company would be to provide a job for Dora who is itching for one and at the same time, perhaps make some money on the investment that the Bluff section would be expected to provide for starting the company, the stock divided into three main blocks, - one for Dora, one for Carolyn and one for us. As the script job for the State comes to a close, Carolyn may or may not get the job of State Archivist which, if she does, would be helpful but not imperative. We could begin production of some Educational films forthwith, beginning with a book on teaching teachers to teach Art to children. This can probably be done anyway, and Irma Somperjac Willard's office will provide the actors, settings, etc., and Carolyn will do the script and one of two or three people can shoot the pictures and Dora can sell the finished work and at the same time, if he so desires, establish a New Orleans office where educational and industrial films can be processed and cleared, and, with capital provided by the Bluff, if it is forthcoming, could be used to begin shooting other films, and in between selling jobs, Dora could whip up some pictorial books from a tons of films the Marshall woman already has and I could do a bit of public pulse taking and tie up a few contacts for the concern and general radiate enthusiasm on the part of the producers in the company and prospective clients. Of course the thing may come to naught or it may come to something. There are elements in such an undertaking that would contribute mightily toward its success. One advantage is that it could begin on a shoe string or could rocket into something impressively broad, and at the same time provide agreeable employment for everybody concerned and delight the Bluff ladies, too, since they are both enthusiastic about anything which Dora likes. I provided Carolyn with a prospectus of the Archivist job which she will present to the Governor either this week or next and a prospectus for her to present to Dora and associates covering the other business..... interruption.... Dora just telephoned to say Howdy, that Kay is still in South Carolina, getting deeds to property on which new oil wells are to be drilled in Louisiana, and I didn't breathe anything about Panoramics Associates.....

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7592

Monday, September 26th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Another summer's day with the thermometer continuing in the 90's with a low of 74 promised tonight, which isn't too low for comfort.

I thought the E. Roscoe Murrow summation of the handling of the press releases by the Assistant Press Secretary of the Summer White House most excellent tonight, and it would appear that nobody was fooled by the initial glossing and that those who instinctively felt that the President's condition was more serious than the first bulletins pretended weren't so wrong.

Carolyn got off at dawn, following a couple of unsuccessful attempts to take a couple of interior shots for a Shreveport article on the Natchitoches Pilgrimage. A faulty flash bulb brought about the production of absolutely nothing. But she was back again before five minutes had elapsed, remembering that she had forgotten the prospectus for the State Archivist job. I could only recall Dora's observation that she is less a woman than triplets.

The reference made in last night's memo concerning the Panoramics Association which, for euphony's sake should probably be boiled down to Panoramic Associates, --giving all members a breadth of girth that is slightly hilarious, really has some excellent potentials for our side, I think. In giving birth to the idea, I probably have done most in whatever contribution I shall make but I feel that should such a company be formed, I shall have the busiest post in the concern, that being to keep both Dora and Carolyn busy with producing whatever is on the docket and not flying off into fascinating but not particularly productive undertakings of the moment. I am glad it is a thing which could be begun on a shoe-string and expanded as circumstances warrant. There would be advantages in the Bluff ladies putting up a large capital, of course, a special from which salaries might be drawn but the absence of such



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a fund might be better all around, since the incentive without it would be the greater in the realms of productivity. How nice it would be if the thing really would mushroom into something that provide lots of people with good jobs, don't you think so. But those are horizons to be contemplated only if and when the organization is ever set up and functioning. Still, it is a pleasure to ponder on such matters, even though the may never emerge into reality.

I can't recall if I have mentioned one thing about the peculiarity of Northern publishers on one matter that has given me pause for much speculation, and so I shall run the risk of boring you further by repeating myself. Holiday turned down the murals story although I must say I think it was the better of such things coming across my desk. And I'm wondering if other magazines may not also turn it down, especially those published in the North. Some months, perhaps years, back, R once remarked that it was so strange how anything that James wrote on the pleasant side about people of color, was invariably rejected by Northern publishers and that when, in articles on some general article, as a travel thing or some such, if an article chanced to include something favorable about the negro, that paragraph was always deleted (or however the word is spelled).

Now here is the mural story, which, quite dispassionately, I consider excellent and everybody agrees that the paintings, and their reproduction in full color, is equally fine, --and yet the whole thing is turned down. In casting about for some reason, one cannot help speculating upon the possibility that Northern Editors feel their readers demand hearing only the horror things about the lot of the negro in the South, and the Lord knows there are too many Money, Mississippi, it being assumed that the editors get more thrilling response to their publications is the stories are all unfavorable to the negro or, as in the mural story, would present the sympathetic white people as softening the sharp edge of the injustices the negro experiences, and therefore said Editors categorically refuse to present ~~as~~ refuse to present a true picture of conditions in order that they can count on more readers ~~as~~ who have made up their minds that only horror stuff obtains and therefore don't want to hear anything about the oases of civilized society below the Mason-Dixon Line. All this must sound both confusing, as it is poorly set down and rather incredible as to fact, but as one casts about trying to find reasons for so many rejections where favorable conditions of individual colored person is concerned, one naturally comes up with such an assumption, whether it be correct or not.....

7594

Tuesday, September 27th, 1955.

Memorandum:

It seems a little odd that no mail for me should have come to hand since Friday, last past. I assume some mail sack must have mis-carried to Melville or some such place and will probably be coming in shortly in ample poundage. There might well have been no first class mail but it is rare that Life magazine doesn't come to hand on the appointed day.

The ladies returned from South Louisiana today. There must have been much dancing in the streets since everything appears rosey, so far as that frolic is concerned.

As a surprise, Celeste stopped off in Alexandria to bring home the piece of marble Blythe had given me to be marked with an S and an arrow. The surprise was complete. So far as the S was concerned, it was very nice, but the arrow was about the size and the appearance of those traffic signs one sometimes sees, the head of the arrow looking like a pure triangle, the stem part being indicated by two parallel lines instead of one. As for the feather part or tail of the thing, the lines indicating the feathers were enclosed in an over-all heavier line, making the whole thing look like an arrow sketched by a traffic cop to be set up on a pole so that it could readily be sighted by motorists half a mile away. And such a cumbersome gob of an arrow dwarfed the S into insignificance. Fortunately the piece of marble is alike, top and bottom and some day I shall sketch an arrow myself on the marble and have someone else cut it. I might add that I submitted a sketch of an arrow with the S in the first place but apparently the stone cutter had ideas of his own and acted upon them.

I have developed a bad habit of paying such slight attention to the chatter that goes on whenever the lady returns from a trip, since there never seems to be anything in the talk of the slightest interest to me, --how the neck line of the prettiest



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girl's gown was out, etc., etc., that I am unable to pass along my particulars except that every year the Sugar Festival gets better and better and that this year they put up additional street markers so that every street in New Iberia bore a name in French, and what the point of that is, I cannot imagine. What a pity there isn't some standard African language so that we might put up signs in such a tongue for the October 15th tour.

And speaking of the latter, I got a kick out of the latest report that one of the ladies, having an ultra modern home on the prospective tour, telephoned Celeste last night to say that the draperies in one of her bed rooms weren't going to be finished before October 15th and so she had decided she would withdraw her house from the tour. Of course the fact that the brochures are already being printed in merely a detail. As of up to now, Miss Julie Prudhomme can't make up her mind if she is going to let her house be on the tour or not and now Lucille Prudhomme of Oakland has expressed the hope that her house may be either the 1st or the third on the Cane River tour and not the 2nd but since Oakland lies between Melrose and Beaufort, I don't know how that is going to be arranged. Well, at least Lucille is getting paid for her trouble which is more than all the others who are giving their all for the sake of refurbishing the Lemme House.

Again I liked E. Roscoe concerning the succession to power of the Vice President whenever the President is incapacitated. It does seem odd that the Founding Fathers didn't give that matter some attention when the Government was being formed and it seems even more strange that some provision hasn't been made during the past 175 years, when, as has happened in both the Garfield and Wilson Administrations, nobody seemed to know whether the President was physically capable of carrying on his office or not. Perhaps the present perplexity will impell the proper authorities to settle the matter for future emergencies.

I thought it pretty funny today when the Chairman of the Republican National Committee, after a conference with Vice President Nixon at the White House, assured the press that he and Mr. Nixon had not discussed politics. If they didn't, they'd better have their heads examined. At first dark tonight, I was thinking of little Miss Lee and how she would have enjoyed watching six humming birds, all in a row, five of them waiting for the other to get through sipping sugar water from their glass feeding bottle on the gallery. They are all so busy these days, ing on extra fat in preparation for their southward migration, I suppose.....

7596

Wednesday, September 28th, 1955.

Memorandum:

It remains wonderfully hot and damp, both the heat and humidity remaining in the 90's.

It really doesn't get dark these nights, what with the waning moon but at just that hour when the moon begins emerging as a source of light tonight, I stood for a while near the butterfly lilies to watch the activities of the humming birds, seemingly growing in numbers with each passing day. Tonight I saw one whose coloring I had never noticed before. He was a cafe au lait with about one part coffee and two parts milk. Although I know nothing about the vast variety of these birds, I don't ever remember having seen any pictures of any so pastel in appearance. Naturally I regret that I could not make out what other colors were assembled to give him the added decors that all of them have in such a multitude of combinations. Perhaps he was an albino. And as I write these lines, I find myself wondering how many of the dozens of varieties Audubon painted for his "Birds of America" series took time out last night to knock off a Prospectus for Panarami Associates, setting forth the proposition in some kind of order. Later I shall send it to Dora to circulate in the nearest "financial circles". I should like to employ the name of Register in the title or sub-title in some fashion, although I haven't thought just how I can do it to best advantage as yet. Like the "Patent" in Patent Medicine, the word, Register, has enough potentials about it to really make it of value, if properly manipulated and it must be my business to put it to the best advantage. I find Panaramic good, suggesting Panam in familiarity and yet suggesting scenes, hence photographic scenes.

As I envision the thing, if it ever eventuates into fact, Dora would handle sales, that Marshall woman production and that would leave a manager's job unfilled, since, if I appear, I would function in a vague sort of way as co-ordinator, or some such. The script writing and production of films would be a full time job and so would sales.

From films, --stills, --already to hand, a flock of pictorial books on the order of "Ghosts Along the Mississippi" could be produced.



7597

It is my understanding that Calrence John paid for the publication of that book out of his own pocket and got it all back, what with the thing having long since been out of print. I find of books after the manner of the *Nola Nance* things could be produced readily enough if money were put up to underwrite them, from the production standpoint. That is where some of the capital should go. And some money should be invested in a shop in New Orleans and a laboratory or studio of some kind where films, both of the movie and the "still" variety, could be processed. With a script properly prepared, a picture could be made inexpensively, for I myself know several ~~extra~~ excellent camera men, such as those who had done work here, and the music and talk for the film could be recorded reasonably in New Orleans.

The point of this whole project is to provide Dora with something to do, and since he is going to do something anyway, which may entail going into business, what could be better than to direct his steps into something about which he knows, --after all those years in Oklahoma University film section, and have the money which will undoubtedly be forthcoming from the Bluff ladies put to use that will provide entertainment at least and possibly profit, though I honestly think the profit element from their point of view is of secondary importance. Forgive me for rattling off all these incoherent thoughts in such a fashion but I do like to keep you abreast with drifts, even though they turn out to have been altogether pointless.

I had coffee with Madam Regard this morning. Celeste spent the day in town, working at a booth operated by the Catholic Daughters, a society to which she belongs. The town is having its annual Fair and everybody seems to like participating in the festivities. I must think to ask if they have dancing in the streets.

What with all the humming bird observations and what not, I let the E. Roscoe Murrow hour slip by, which, in a way, I regret, although, if memory serves me correctly, he usually devotes most of his broadcasts at World Series time to a discussion with some baseball expert on finer points of the day's game, and since I know nothing about that line of endeavor, I should have ~~not~~ got much out of it and it's enough to know that the Yankees won and that vaguely Brooklyn seems to be my favorite and favorite is certainly a strong word in that connection since I know next to nothing about any of the contending teams.

A couple of letters are to be written and then, after providing myself with a bumper of Tender Leaf well iced, I shall resort to further exploration of the Almanac of Liberty.....

7598

Thursday, September 29th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Our summer weather continues and, miraculous to relate, no pilgrims be-cloud the horizon from dawn 'til dusk.

So often these days, when things of a business nature are approaching such a pitch in little Miss Lee's camp, and a billion times a day I find myself wishing I might share a sliver or two of the comparative quiet obtaining in these parts on this side of the bamboo hedge. I realize full well how impossible it must be for you even to get a chance to catch your breath and I pray you not to think of taking pen in hand until well after all that excitement along the Jersey coast has well subsided.

I smiled to myself this evening when I heard the news reports regarding the President's progress. The job of Press Secretary must be a headache, no matter what does or doesn't happen. Yesterday, for example, it was stated that the President was using a talking book "for the use of the blind" to read some Western tales. Suppose a segment of the population must have assumed from that that the President had lost his sight, for tonight it was stated that the President had played some recordings of Bach music and that "a pretty nurse" had read him some mystery stories. I suppose the Bach was to take care of the presence of the reading machine and "the pretty young nurse" was to suggest that talking book records, reserved for the blind, weren't being employed by anyone not 100 percent entitled to them. But just why the "young" and "pretty" nurse had to be thus described, I know not unless it is the theory of the experts that a man suffering from a stroke re-acts vigorously to the presence of youth and beauty at his bedside.

Another item in the news that impressed me was the fact that the Vice President, when convening the Security Council today, called for a minute of silent prayer at the opening of the session as an expression of hope for the President's continued recovery. It seemed to me that no matter how persuasive the Nixon may be, he was spreading his stuff pretty thick ~~at~~ at such a meeting. The next thing we shall hear, I fear, is that the union Senator from Wisconsin will be pulling some such line, as he pauses in his pursuit of innocent people he likes to label Communists.



8037

7599

Friday, September 30th, 1955.

The afternoon radio spoke of Catherine Cornell, or does she spell it Katherine, has had a lung operation in Boston. E. Roscoe didn't mention this although it would have been as interesting as some of the baseball tomfoolery. I suppose the lady must be among those at the top of the American stage of our generation and somehow we are often fully as interested in the lives of our great players as we are in our foremost politicians. I certainly hope both Boston and Denver continue with favorable progress on the part of their respective patients.

There was a full quorum of three at coffee this morning. Celeste said that as Jeddy's birthday is Monday and Madam Regard's on Tuesday, she has decided to have a nice dinner on Sunday to celebrate both at a single sitting. I am hoping it may dawn on her between now and the Sabbath that 90 percent of a banquet is the peace and quiet going into the sitting.

I shall finish the Douglas Almanac tonight, the happier for the full realization it brings that Justice Douglas is just the sort of person his Almanac reveals. It's a book which should scarcely be read as I have read it, since each page, --ink printed, would be complete in itself and sufficient for contemplation (contemplation) as would be possible in the old fashioned Almanac, or in the columnist's paragraph in syndicated articles. It goes without saying that I am hoping that his visit to Russia this past summer may result in another book from his pen.

As for the October 15th, tour, the pamphlets haven't been printed as yet, the envelopes addressed or even a mailing list concocted. What with several different organizations in cities from 100 to 300 miles away having volunteered to transmit extra copies of the prospectus to their friends and associates, after receiving the initial batch, something tells me that there isn't going to be too much time left for transmitting the message by this medium. But that's part of the things at the social butterflies will have to learn in their current flutterings. I apologize for having talked so much to so little point. If only toil doesn't get down those hands are so filled with labor these days .....

1037

7600

Friday, September 30th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Well, the month seems to be about played out, the week about played out, the day about played out, my telephone, which I need at the moment is played out but I don't seem to have quite played my last card.

All the talk I have been making about no mail can be unwritten off for the moment. Not so much came today but what little I skimmed through when a couple of dawdling secretaries blew in -- and out -- convinces me that I got enough for a single sitting, at least.

Station WDSU wrote from New Orleans, --in response to my letter to Bob, written before he quitted the Crescent City for Manhattan, saying that I might borrow the Clementine Hunter film. Frankly, on ripping through the letter, I had forgotten I had ever asked for such a thing. But then I remembered that I had told the Associated Clubs in Natchitoches it might be good way to drum up trade for their Pilgrimage if they had the film shown in Shreveport, Monroe, Baton Rouge, etc., and now it appears I can so borrow it. I should like to set the wheels turning on the placement of that item with the various TV stations but I shall have to wait until my Alexander Bell wonder revives.

A letter from Dora says he needed exactly the letter he got from me, suggesting he do a book entitled "There's Where My Heart...." which would be a pictorial thing of little Miss Hunter. I regret I read all the mail so fast that I shall have to retain it for a more careful look at some of the points. As I recall, Dora mentions that at one time he and Kay thought of a Royal Street shop, "something that would take up their time and at the same instant, provided them with an opportunity to be free". That's the kind of a job everybody is probably looking for and with their oil wells, they ought to be able to find just that. Dora also wants to know if I mind if he again has a go at the Prince of Jallon story. As the secretary ran through that part of the letter, the title for the book struck me, -- "Natchez Prince". He thinks the book ought to have tourist appeal both in Natchez and New Orleans. I have thought so for about 16 years, so we are as one on that.



7601

And then a letter from Carolyn, of which I skimmed about at such a great rate that I am considerably in a fog about it. There seem to be three points, --the gourd pictures in color came out nicely. A couple of more shots in color when the crop has been completely harvested and the story should be ready for Look or some such.

The second point has to do about a conference she has arranged in New Orleans for Sunday, Oct. 2nd, with some company that wants a film on British Honduras fisheries, --of all things. The time required for the doing would be about six months, the price paid fifteen thousand dollars. I can't recall if she remarked or if I thought that this out to be a good "clinger" for establishing the Panoramic Associates thing. She has the know-how and the job. All he Bluff has to supply is the capital.

Her third point referred to Delta Pictures which is doing the "Louisiana-Report" scripts. The Governor's executive secretary is one of the Associates of Delta Pictures and he asked Carolyn to sip a cup of coffee so he might apologize for the way Delta has been holding out salaries. This apology on his part seems to be the proper place for him to show his good will by arranging a conference with the Governor for early next week at which time the State Archivist job will be offered for the Governor's approval. As this letter seems to have been divided into three parts, it seems to carry out Dora's observation that that Marshall woman is triplets, or ought to be or some such.

It seems a little odd, although I may have read the letter so fast, I didn't catch it, that nothing was said about the article which appeared in the Baton Rouge Advocate, an article which I have enclosed under separate cover for your delectation and which I trust, as usual, you will not return, that is to say, usual in such clippings unless specifically mentioned. The General sent me two copies, so I have one. Come to think of it, perhaps he got an advance copy of the October 2nd, edition, or perhaps this is merely from last Sunday's edition, --it doesn't matter either way.

And so things turn and I shall now turn to the mail before calling it a day, a week and a month.

If only this may be a placid week at Lyme, what with the breakers rolling in on the Jersey coast and all.....

7602

Monday, October 3rd, 1955.

Memorandum:

Summer lingers on and I like it but one of these evenings, it's going to start cooling off and then Indian Summer will have arrived, I suppose, --but not yet.

As a matter of fact, I am inclined to believe the newly weds will be making it before Indian Summer, for I have no guess as to when the latter will make it but I figure that Kay will be back in the Crescent City shortly and as she went to South Carolina for legal papers, I figure they will be heading out to Franklin or where ever it is the legal matters are transacted and once that has been taken care of, they will swing around in this direction on their way home. Of course that is like a resident of Manhattan taking himself to Jersey City on business and swinging around by way of West Point on his way back to Manhattan but with ample amounts of time and money on one's hands, I suppose that might be as pleasant a way as any when mileage doesn't count.

Last night I finished the Maurois rendition of the Dumas story. The book contains a heap of particulars about Dumas, but it is primarily facts and Dumas himself never seems to have endeared himself to the author and one never feels a breath of life in the quadroom.

Perhaps A. Dumas was a little too fabulous for A. Maurois, and since there probably never could be a biographer who could resemble such a character, it would be impossible to put vitality into such a person, which, as I say it, it occurs to me that I sound as though a biographer is perhaps most successful when the subject with which he is dealing in some ways are or is identical, either in personality or aspiration. Didn't Zweig say that Erasmus was the portrait he liked best of all those he had worked on. And it seems to me he said something about it being in the nature of a self portrait. I think I never heard of anyone so childish as Dumas who was so wonderfully gifted. --the man who made 10 fortunes but ended ill. I shall always regret I never read his travel books, perhaps half a dozen, which he wrote following his visit to Russia. Maurois says it is impossible to tell what in it is fact and what is fancy but whatever Dumas had to tell was entertaining regardless, and the account of his travels might well of had that quality about them which would be wonderful, I should imagine.



7603

7603

And just as I turned this page, the telephone rang. It was Dora, speaking from Franklin. He said he and Kay would like to pass this way tomorrow around 2 and that they would be staying in town and that they would like me to sup with them.

I had written them a few days back that the lady across the fence was making strange noises about all the difficulties attendant upon doing anything for the big house and that probably a visit, so far as staying over night in the big house, could be accomplished more satisfactorily if attempted after rather than before the 15th. Hence their decision to park in town for food and sleep and the balm of their time can be spent at Yucca.

I saw Pat at breakfast this morning. He said he might have dinner on Sunday across the fence 2 or even 3 times throughout the entire year but no more than that, what with all the performances going on there at every Sabbath gathering. I can appreciate his decision so thoroughly and so sympathetically. Personally, I should prefer a crust of bread at home or no food at all to the almost invariable fit of nerves that are trotted out at each breaking of bread. For J. H.'s sake and that of Madam Regard, I am glad to go through the mill, as it were, once each week,--and somehow the whole thing seems so cockeyed, such delectable food consumed under such wearing tension.

What a pity one of the Old Testament scribes didn't take time out to give us a picture of what Heaven was like before God put His foot down and cast out the Devil. Perhaps it was like Melrose, -- all ingredients for Paradise present, coupled with one or two dark angels to keep a perpetual racket a-go-in'.

Grandpa's kittens have reached that state of development in which there is nothing so exhilarating in this world as climbing up the screen door. At the sound of a soft thump at the door, I glance in that direction. The moonlight on the broad leaves of the banana plants beyond glisten in the moonlight, bringing into stronger outline the full length figures of a couple of kittens, crawling up the screen, their fat stomachs pressing against the wire mesh and their bright eyes reflecting the glow from my desk lamp. They had corn bread and chicken bones for the supper a while back and they loved them. Apparently they know there is a glass of milk awaiting them before bed time and I suppose that instead of crying, they are employing the screen door climbing method to call my attention to their presence and their willingness to have a go at a saucer of milk.

And so I shall go attend to them and then undertake some mail, and so to bed.....

7604

7604

Tuesday, October 4th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Tucked away safely in my armoire is your air mail which came to hand in this morning's post.

At coffee this morning, Madam Regard beamed with delight when she appeared. She said that little Miss Lee had remembered her birthday and that she had received the sweetest card with the sweetest message ever. It would have done your heart good to see how much pleasure the message afforded her.

I really had plenty of people about who were physically able to help me with my in-coming mail, but the three secretaries who put in appearances at different times were each in his turn able to arrive at such times as the three grown people who were here were gumming up the efficient operations of the secretariat and I preferred the peace and quiet of tomorrow's opportunities over the pressure of guests to enjoy a little chat with you.

Our summer weather continues, the thermometer well up in the 90's which made it convenient for getting around, for warmth is preferable to dampness in moseying about to the African House, across the fields to the artist's cabin and up and down the road.

Last night when the call came through from South Louisiana, I understood the J. P. R.'s to say I might expect them at 2, and so I did. But precisely at 2, my telephone rang, -- Baton Rouge calling. It was Carolyn saying she was about to head out for Shreveport and would be glad if I could give her a hand on a couple of points on the Natchitoches tour article which is supposed to appear in next Sunday's Shreveport Times. If she doesn't get the article and the photographs in before or at least by Wednesday, it seems to me it's going to miss publication, and that would be a great pity, since it is imperative, to do any good as publicity, of course, that it be in the paper on the Sunday prior to the Saturday tour. And since the social section can always be taken care of after business has been disposed of, I gave the nod, and the surprise was considerable all around.



7605

Surprises there were, but most of them insignificant ones and obviously for me rather than others.

For example, instead of arriving at 2, the J. P. R.'s got her at 5:30. And then there was the color of the D. P. truck which I recalled as being black and which was not. And Kay and I recalled on sight of them how fond I had been of them, rather more so than I can recall, and the sensation was odd enough, for somehow in appearance they seemed like two other people than the ones I had known before, the same personalities but somehow in different physical form.

I said no to their invitation to go see the artist with them. As a matter of fact, the slip covers for the upper floor of the big house were supposed to arrive, all encased in the furniture, and some more sofas, chairs, etc., to be hauled into town by the same truck, and it seemed better somebody be here. Besides, I thought it would be nice all around if the artist's old boy friend could mosey across the field with his wife on his arm, so that too many people wouldn't have to be cluttering up the Hunter gallery. And so it was, and in half an hour the newly weds were back here and fortified with a coke, which we carried with us, we mounted the stairs of the African House. Dora was delighted with all he had to see and I was delighted that he was delighted, naturally.

Kay and I sat and chatted while Dora made the rounds and then Carolyn appeared and I told them they were all about to be noble but they weren't going to like the enforced nobility, --they had to go next door and say Howdy to the ladies, a dictum at which they all hooped and hollered, but go we did.

But we didn't linger long, --that's why I wanted to go at that moment because I knew Celeste was expecting the priests for cards and that J. H. would be going to the club. And so it pained out, --J. H. and Dora in one corner chatting for a few minutes, Carolyn and Madam Regard in another and Kay and Celeste in the third and I in the fourth chatting with one of the guests who had already arrived. We lingered about 10 minutes, I think, and then were back at Yucca and everybody feeling all his nobility.

The J. P. R.'s, invited us to dine in town with them, --they declined J. H.'s most cordial invitation to remain here because I told them I thought it better to skip same if projected. But it was pleasant all around and we were back here by 10:30 to get to work on the Shreveport Times thing and now it is late and I must eventually fold up my beard. I think the J. P. R.'s come here tomorrow and go to Briarwood tomorrow night.....

7606

Wednesday, October 5th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Only little Miss Lee can appreciate with what keen anticipation I contemplate the advent of tomorrow's dawn when secretaries will pass this way before diving into the cotton patch. My armoire remains closed but will give up its written treasure five hours hence.

My day has been a fairly brisk one but, what with the fine summer weather continuing, I got through it with a minimum of difficulties.

Last night along about 6:30, the people who are doing the slip covers for the upstairs big house furniture, brought in a sofa or two and a couple of chairs in a big old truck. They drove the truck to the back steps where they unloaded the stuff and then, when they swung the truck around to pull out, they backed into the cistern, knocking it slap down, half of the bricks falling into the cistern, the other half waving in the breeze. And so at 5 this morning, I marshalled forces to bring sand, cement and new brick and a couple of workmen to put the thing back in order. And from then until now: --11:30 at night, I haven't been alone for a second.

In what turned out to be a slightly futile undertaking, I dictated captions for Hatchitoches Tour pictures, intended for the Shreveport Times on Sunday. At 9, to keep things right side up, Carolyn and I, although short for time, took coffee with the ladies across the fence. I have seen quite a few performances but Celeste put on one that beat anything yet. She nearly burst into tears on several occasions, so mad or perhaps so wrought up was the lady. She explained to Carolyn that she wanted her to understand that it was her desire that the Shreveport Times devoted as much space as possible to the houses on the tour but she wanted to make it equally clear that as she herself would never think of being interested in an old house if it weren't on a tour, she most certainly didn't expect people reading the articles



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7607

to be interested in the place on any day except on Saturday, the 15th. There was tons of such sort of non-sense with one or two faintly veiled barbs at me for making her life miserable by permitting people to visit the place. Eventually we got out of the tea pot tempest and, returning to this machine, cut the article in half and then in half again and eliminated all but a few non-descript illustrations, and let the thing slide. I should assume that the lady is heading for a crack up but I have assumed that before and been wrong.

The J. P. R.'s arrived at 10 and remained until 15 minutes before I got to this machine tonight. They seem to be getting on fine. We did a mid day tour of the river to avoid Melrose at the dinner hour and at 2 Carolyn left for Shreveport. At 5:30, the J. P. R.'s invited me to dine with them in town and that was pleasant. On our return at 7:30, we saw J. H. going from the store to his house, and it was nice to have him come and chat with us for half an hour. He doesn't seem ruffled by the domestic storm brewing under his roof.

On our return to Yucca, the moment seemed auspicious to give a brief thumbnail sketch of the "Know Your Garden" project. Both Kay and her husband seemed delighted with its potentials. They want to have a formal session about it in November. Their thought is that I will run down to New Orleans for the meeting and my thought is that they will run up here. I can't see myself going there but the situation in the lunatic section across the fence at the time will probably determine the outcome.

Tomorrow afternoon the J. P. R.'s will drop by Briarwood and on Friday morning they will come this way again to say Goodbye as they head back toward New Orleans. As I never saw Dor alone, it seemed to me better not to inquire if he planned to stop off at Baton Rouge to see Miss Maa, but come to think of it, they did say they were going back by way of Lafayette and Franklin, which will mean they will not be in the Baton Rouge area.

One thing I learned from Carolyn that was arresting. Irma S. Willard, at their luncheon in Baton Rouge the other day, expressed enchantment over the Art Education film and suggested, apropos of nothing, that Carolyn accompany her on a tour to Havana in January when big shots in the Industrial world will charter a boat for the purpose. Those two ladies didn't know it, but S. G. Henry, as President of the B. R. Chamber of Commerce, with wife, will be on said junket. Lord, Lord, how things do swirl.....

3035

7608

Thursday, October 6th, 1955.

Memorandum:

It was so good, starting the day off right by the happy conjunction of the contents of the armoir and a secretary.

And how noble of the Lady of Lyme to take pen in hand at a time when things are so by sixes and sevens to force a moment for such a delightful chat.

It is heartening to learn that some of those who have had their paths smoothed for them at the office have volunteered the gesture of appreciation is in order. Naturally I am hoping that the days off, as referred to, may be generous in number and that an opportunity will present itself for little Miss Lee to make the most of them by doing nothing. As for the compensation improvements, let us hold the thought that they will be not so much as mentioned as a fuller manifestation of appreciation of just a little, at least, of what has been undertaken and accomplished. Heaven knows it will never reach the figure it should, even my the most modest estimates.

As for correspondence, I pray you not to let it sail along as best suits the prevailing breeze, knowing full well as you do that the silence is merely an optical illusion for one who is sensitive to telepathy. It is so good to know that all other clouds of gloom can be disposed of as mere vapor on the part one who never doubts the unfailing qualities of Southern sunshine. It is so kind of you to remark upon such facts and by all rights it should inspire the Southern sunshine to send brighter beams than are sometimes the case when I toss in elements that are often on the ridiculous side and frequently tiresome. But I shall always try to keep the sketches true to the light in which I see them so that you may always rest assured that the pulse of the neighborhood may be well within your understanding.



8037

7609

This morning arrived in a neat little package the two generously filled little sacks of Freesias, one Snowstorm white, the other lavender. Need I say it didn't take me two minutes to round up a flock of earthen pots and get them planted. I placed them on the front gallery where they will get plenty of warm sunshine and where I can sprinkle them easily from the hydrant there. I want them where I can see them a dozen times a day and watch their progress. The lavender ones I am keeping separate from those I planted last year just to see how the coloring compares. As for the Snowstorm variety, this will be my first attempt with them and naturally I shall eagerly watch their growth and you may be expecting to hear a report in a few weeks as to the appearance of the first buds of the impending white flurry. I put some bulbs of both varieties in one pot with a view of surprising Madam Regard with a flowering gift from you a little later in the season. I know that she will love them doubly because of their origin.

I got around to read an ancient letter of Dora's, - at least a week or ten days old and the news from Robina had been in my armoire along with the letter from Lyme.

It goes without saying that I was surprised to learn of the death of Kenneth Hunt during the summer. I suppose it is remarkable, in a way, that he should have lived these 8 or 9 years, following the breaking of his back but somehow I wasn't exactly prepared to learn of his death. It seems a little odd that Rudolph didn't drop me a card concerning the death of his old friend but perhaps the news failed to reach him as he traveled about Europe.

From Miss Nellie's letter, it would seem that Natchez is still too busy to write letters to her. This seems a great pity since it is obvious she leans so heavily for entertainment on news from her old acquaintances in The Bluff City. Frankly, I think they could do better and particularly so since they all must know she can't possibly be here for them to make happy much longer anyway. But then, we know perfectly well that Natchez never would write letters and so I suppose we might as well accept that fact, even when it concerns one of their oldest friends.

Across the fence the same high tension continues to obtain. I look for the final touch to come along about Friday night when it would surprise me not at all if the whole Wentk tribe blew in for the week end. That certainly would be the final touch. And now I must turn to the mail and after that, I must try getting caught up on some sleep. Do hope since last you set hand to paper you have had some luck in that direction.....

1137

7610

Friday, October 7th, 1955.  
Memorandum: I am writing you this morning about the Freesias I have just received from you. I am very pleased to hear that you are well and hope you are enjoying the autumn weather. I am writing you this morning about the Freesias I have just received from you. I am very pleased to hear that you are well and hope you are enjoying the autumn weather.

How nice to find your early-early Wednesday letter in today's post. And thanks much for the clippings, both of which I have read in part and which I shall read and undoubtedly re-read over the week end. J. H. counted Mr. Johnston as a friend, I believe, which isn't surprising as you probably surmised, as both have been so active in cotton matters.

As for the full page item concerning the outrageous doings in and about Money, Mississippi, I had heard on the radio that there had been such an item published and that was all. It is so good to be able to know exactly what they were talking about on the radio, thanks to your thoughtfulness and you may be sure I shall digest the item with the keenest interest.

As indicated in an earlier memo, I planted the freesias, immediately upon their arrival. One of the pots contains the nice circle imaginable of the lavender ones and slap in the middle of the circle I placed the bulb of the Snowstorm. This pot I shall present to Madam Regard when it approaches perfection. What with temperatures beginning to tumble and All Saints Day three weeks off, meaning that a cold snap could come during the lady's absence in South Louisiana as she always is around All Saints Day, it seems to me better that I keep the pot under my wing until she gets stationed at home for a while where she can keep an eye on them. I know she is going to be entranced at the prospect of having them and I shall tell her I am nursing them along for her in your behalf.

And may I say how much I appreciate your kindness in setting me straight about the card I sent along which turns out to have been from Time rather than Life. I had gathered some time back that the one magazine uses the files of the other for advertising purposes in drumming up new subscribers. It was so generous of you to offer taking care of a subscription to Time but



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as I have no one to read periodicals, I would not get the good out of it I do out of Life which, with its pictures and shorter text, seems to suit my situation so neatly. The plantation subscribes to Time and so I could always borrow it if some article of particular importance should appear. I shall be thinking of little Miss Lee the next time I glance in its direction.

I was naturally distressed to learn that this week has been reaching a pitch even higher than last week, which I thought had attained an impossible level. How well do I understand what you mean when you say that this will be the last time such a jam will be piled up for you to contend with. I do so sincerely hope that you may get through the current one without being knocked out completely. Do, please, try to recuperate just as soon as possible.

Across the fence this morning, everything was as sweet as it has been sour on the previous days. I think lots of people, J. H. being one of them, can take these switches from extreme to extreme all in his stride. I am not in that class at all. No amount of sugar after a draught of vinegar produces any other sensation than that vinegar has been the precursor of the sweet, but naturally I try keeping the even tenor of my visage throughout today's performance would suggest that the lady is beginning to get the idea that playing at rigging up the place for an annual pilgrimage might be fun after all. I hope so, for in the end, that might tend to preserve the place more effectively than anything else, so far as money being invested in its repairs and upkeep. But so far as my relations with the lady is concerned, nothing in this world she could ever do would restore any respect I have for her as a personality or as a friend, although she will probably never know that.

The J. P. Rls arrived at 11:30 today and dined with me at the big house. They reported the Briarwood gal was looking splendid and getting along wonderfully well. As her ancient colored servant, Nora, now has a telephone, -- that seems odd, one may now telephone Carrie via the Nora line and thus establish a connection.. Everything seems rosey with the newly weds and they departed for the Franklin properties at 1:30, both obviously as contented with life and each other as two gay kittens. Our temperature will drop to 55 tonight and accordingly I put the wool tack back on my bed tonight, following its summer vacation on the shelf. I fervently hope this week end may witness a measure of rest and quiet at Lyme.....

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7612

Sunday, October 9th, 1955.

Memorandum:

The weather continues cool and cloudless, ideal for the Church Fair held yesterday and today across the river at St. Augustin's. Or perhaps it would be more correct to say that it is being held last night and tonight since it seems to get under way about sunset and continues until after midnight, the business concluding with dancing in the Convent this Sabbath night. It seems so odd that I never quite get accustomed to the idea of dancing in the Convent on Sunday night but the practice is so old that its novelty should long since have worn off.

On Saturday morning I was vaguely surprised to learn that the whole Wenk tribe had arrived during the night and were spending the day here. Sister apparently was not drinking and equally surprising, was in a pleasant humor. I did not see her until 10 o'clock when she came over to pay me a visit. The sun was so pleasant and the air so cool, I recommenced sitting on the gallery which we did. We all dined together and she went to the store. I did not see any of them again, thank Heavens. The only thing of interest I learned from her had to do with her plans for the next two weeks. She said her husband was leaving on the morrow for a medical meeting in New York to be gone for two weeks and that she would be terribly busy during his absence, supervising the nursing home, etc., etc. I counted this as good news since one might assume, although without certainty, that she would not, therefore, gum up the works next Saturday by putting in an appearance on Pilgrimage day.

The Shreveport Times gave about half a page to a write up about the first annual tour of historic Natchitoches. There were a few pictures, --and somebody said there was a figure standing by the old columns of the Bullard mansion accompanying the article that looked like me. How odd. After the spasm Celeste had put on about providing publicity that would quicken the imagination of readers for but one day only, after which everyone was supposed to play he had never heard of the Cane River country, I aided Carolyn in re-writing the



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manuscript, eliminating all pictures of Cane River plantation homes and cutting references to their historic background to a sliver.

Ora telephoned me during the morning to say she thought she detected my subtle hand in much of the phraseology of the article. Again may I say How odd.

When the tour was still in embryo stage, I asked Ora to dispense hospitality at Yucca while I performed at the African House. She said she didn't know how it would fit in with her teaching schedule at college but if that could be worked out, she would be delighted. Today's call indicated the matter wasn't settled entirely but she had hopes. She was told when I first called her about giving me a hand that she might get a similar call from her sister-in-law, Madam Beaufort, who had telephoned me while trying to make up her mind if she would permit her house to be on the tour and I had told her that I had asked Ora to help me. Immediately after that telephone conversation, it develops, Beth called Ora and asked her to assist at Beaufort. Naturally Ora responded flatly in the negative. So things shape up.

Tonight's reports from Denver, marking the 2nd week of the President's illness, somehow suggests that his stroke must have been a severe one, what with the chance that he will not be back in the White House before the first of the year. A few commentators observe that if he does not accept the nomination in August, he can certainly name the candidate who will run in his place. His puzzling enthusiasm for Mr. Nixon sets me to wondering if he would name him. Somehow I feel brother Nixon would not be a good vote-getter but perhaps that is merely because I, personally, have a feeling he is a fraud, based in large measure upon his performances during the last Presidential campaign, performances which for what reason I have never been able to imagine, seemed to move Mr. Eisenhower to tears of joy and satisfaction.

I still cast about unsuccessfully to discover "Meet the Press". I thought I had caught up with it at one point when the announcer remarked that that it would come on in one minutes, but it never did, --just some old musical thing.. It was early this morning when I stepped in to the Blessed Martin's sanctuary. My most fervent wish was that peace today obtained at Lyme.....

7614

Monday, October 10th, 1955.

Our summer wearther is back again and I'm all in favor of same.

Today's post brought the enclosure from Rudolph. Of course, the most interesting thing about the letter is the one point he failed to mention, ---Kenneth's death. As Rudolph was Kenneth's best friend, it would naturally be expected that word concerning Kenneth would have come from Rudolph. Wouldn't it be even more odd if, by some quirk of Fate, Rudolph still is in the dark about it, as much as we were until Robina's last letter referred to it as having taken place in the summer. I have no doubt, however, that Rudolph knows about it. Surely his letter is a classic example of how mutual friends can proceed on the assumption that each knows some detail or other, and by failing to mention it, one remains quite oblivious about it.

Herewith or under separate cover, I'll enclose the clipping from the Shreveport paper of yesterday concerning the impending tour and the pamphlet being issued in town concerning the doings. I suspect Charles Cunningham whose press published the pamphlet, must have had a stock of odd sized paper since it seems to be of a dimension that nobody on earth could fold up to fit a regulation envelopes without making a mess of it.

I was interested as usual in the report from Denver tonight concerning Mr. Eisenhower's condition, as reported by the CBS correspondence from that quarter. He referred to the heart specialist, Dr. White as "a perky little man". I am not quite sure what a "perky little man" is like but I think the reporter may have meant a "pert little man", although I don't have the services of a recorded dictionary and so am unable to check again my own concept of the difference in meaning of those two words.

As for the report itself, I concluded that either I do not understand English or that the the medical profession has a lingo whose precise meaning is understood only by members of that profession or that the medecine men and the politicians cooked up and have been cooking up statements concerning the President's health that are simply intended to mislead.

You may have noticed all during the past two weeks, they



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have given emphasis to the brighter side of the picture by solemnly stating from day to day that there are no complications. This did seem re-assuring, primarily, I suppose, because the bulletins gave the impression of satisfaction that no complications had appeared, leading one to assume that complications were something to be dreaded and since no complications had appeared; that was good news.

But, as a layman, I haven't the slightest idea as to what complications were to be looked for as an unpleasant possibility. Off hand, I should guess that most people thing of some form of paralysis as being more or less likely following a stroke. From this I concluded that "complications" referred to paralysis and that as nobody has breathed that word so far that I have heard, it was to be assumed that no paralysis had developed.

But tonight's Denver broadcast mentions that the heart heals quickly in some cases of this nature, some more leisurely and some very slowly and that is the case with the President's, --a very slow healing. This is the first time I have heard any mention of this aspect of his condition. So far as I know, "very slow healing" doesn't mean "complication", --at least not in the medical jargon, but if anything other than sheer paralysis is referred to when using the words, "no complications", I should conclude off hand that an inclination of the heart to heal very slowly would constitute quite a decided complication in itself.

In short, I find myself still in the same frame of mind that I have been since the first reports I heard of the President's illness, which I got not on Saturday but on Sunday two weeks back. At the time I felt intuitively that some hush-hush business was being employed in the news releases. I must say that after tonight's report, I still labor under the same impression.

At supper tonight, J. H. expressed the opinion that Sherman Adams at present is President of the United States. He thinks slick Mr. Nixon is merely serving as window dressing and that although he probably doesn't like that role, there isn't much he can do about it and that Mr. Adams is really calling the tunes. I apologize for having gone on at such a great rate about all this but I must confess that the question as to which person is swaying the sceptre is so infrequent under parallel circumstances that I find the mere novelty makes it interesting to speculate upon.....

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Tuesday, October 11th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Our lovely Indian Summer continues.

At 9 o'clock coffee, I found Father Robal with the ladies. He was over this way to return unsold Cane River plates which had figured in the St. Augustin Fair. Some notion as to the scantiness of this year's crop and consequent shortage of ready money seems to be reflected in the modest amount of business done at the Fair. Two years ago 72 Cane River plates were sold. This year only four were purchased.

As we came out from coffee, Celeste noticed a car standing by the side gate and asked if I had been expecting company. I had not. On investigation as to the identity of the pilgrim, I discovered it to be none other than your friend, Madam Beaufort. She had made a tour of the big house, the African House and Yucca on her own hook. She said she wanted to see for herself what preparations we were amking for Saturday's tour. She is a bag.

She modestly remarked that as the outstanding authority on flowers in Natchitoches Parish, she had to admit that the local butterfly lilies were the most gorgeous she had ever seen. Further she said she was puzzled as to why, when I gave her some roots two years ago, I had given her an inferior grade that died within the year. She wanted me to give her some of the roots of better quality.....imagine.....and at the same time she would like me to give her lots of cannas, Giant's Beard, Sago palms and lots of gourds. Obviously she was in one of her more wacky moods and gave the impression that instead of getting mad at her, I laughed at every ridiculous thing she said.

She observed that next year the pilgrimage should be held in the Spring when her camellias were at their best and didn't I agree with her. I told her that frankly, I thought she was off the track and that since money for restoration of the Lemee House was the purpose of the tour, a heap more of it could be



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rounded up if Natchitoches held the tour as it is this year, in October, and so avoid the inevitable competition which would have to be bucked, were the thing to function at the same time as the Natchez pilgrimage and the New Orleans Spring Festival. She countered with the declaration that she wanted the tour when her camellias were at their best and, besides, she wanted some good butterfly lily roots, which seemed to have no relationship, the one with the other, since camellias are March numbers and the lillies a deep summer and autumnal specialty. I think she finally gave me up as a bad job and so struck out for Celeste's where she remained until nearly time for their dinner.

Carolyn telephoned from Marshall at 2, saying she had to be in Lafayette forthwith and asking if I could give her a hand on the 30 page application she is making for a Guggenheim award for the study of Cajun influences on American civilization.

Naturally I said I could and did. The Cajun country was selected as a subject on a Pipes recommendation that something be selected that wouldn't sound too foreign to the ears of the Guggenheim award committee and as probably nearly everyone has heard of Evangeline, familiarity might give one an inside track on the application.

Before she arrived, I prepared an outline for a series of 65 articles for the Magazine Section of the Times Picayune which I think she could toss off with comparative ease and which she might just as well offer to Mr. Ogden since she seems to enjoy his consideration at the moment. My thought is that the Picayune would increase interest in its paper if each Sunday it carried a pictorial article, devoted to certain limited high points in a different Louisiana Parish. One Sunday might be entitled:

West Feliciana--  
Parish Points and Pointers.

Three subjects only would be touched upon, say, the new Highway 61, which Mrs. Stirling is always talking about, Audubon-Oakley State Park and the South's loliest graveyard, at St. Francisville.

Natchitoches  
Parish Point and Pointers  
could be covered by the Christmas lights, the Lemee House and the African House murals, and so the series could go. Many of the illustrations for such articles are already to hand and stirring up a brief text would be easy. Well, we shall see what Mr. Ogden says.

One joke about the Baton Rouge special feature article on the Natchitoches tour, appearing in last Sunday's paper, --about equal to the Shreveport layout, was the fact that the newspaper made an error and used an elegant cut of the Natchez Melrose to illustrate the caption made for the Louisiana Melrose.....

7618

Wednesday, October 12th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Our elegant Indian Summer weather continues. We are promised a "widely scattered shower" tonight, followed by fair, cooler weather on the morrow, and what with the Chinese fire crackers exploding in the radio at turrow time, I guess the cool air is on the way but I see nothing of the "widely scatter shower".

I missed the beginnings of news broadcasts all along the way today and being a person not very historically minded, I guess, it never dawned on me until late in the afternoon that today is Columbus Day. And since it is Columbus Day, I found myself wondering if the date of that gentleman's birth is known. It is interesting that Discovery Day should be celebrated as Columbus Day and I've been turning over in my mind other dates bearing a man's name and all that I can think of seem to celebrate the date of his birth and not the date of some particular achievement.

Somebody said the banks in town were closed today but mail delivery out this way was per schedule although not much came to hand.

When the P. R.'s were here and Dora mentioned his interest in photography, I suggested that he try his hand while living in the Crescent City of doing a book after the manner of Paris de Nuit. I explained the general nature of the pictures in that volume and suggested that in a Nouvelle Orleans de Nuit it might be nice to include exterior night views of one of the famous restaurants and one of the more widely advertised Bourbon Street dives, a picture of the Cathedral taken at night when the lights in Jackson Square would outline the towers against the sky, a slap up against General Jackson's statue which would thereby appear in silhouette, the Huey P. Long bridge in semi-darkness and so on and so forth. He probably will not get around to do this but it seems to me it would be a good idea to provide some entertainment for him while the oil wells are perking.



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At supper tonight, J. H. gave me a letter, written by some lady in Pennsylvania, interested in the genealogy of the Picou family. She had read the name in Arnett Kane's Plantation Parade, had written him concerning Miss Cammie's grandmother and Mr. Kane, in turn, had recommended she write to J. H. for particulars and J. H., in turn, gave it to me.

I don't know if I ever talked much about Carmolyte Picou much or not. Miss Cammie never knew much about this Breauz Bridge, La. lady, except that she was an orphan possessed of some property and that her guardians had permitted her to marry at the age of 13 to Isaac Erwin whose first wife had left him a dozen children, some of whom were much older than the new 13 year old stepmother. The Erwins were Porte tants but little Miss Picou was a Catholic and the marriage was performed by a priest after special dispensation had been secured from the Chrch, ermitting the groom, a tall man, to remain seated during the ceremony while his 13 year old bride stood beside him. How lacking in imagination Isaac Erwin must have been since it would have been so easy for him on the day of the wedding to find himself indisposed to the extent of being unable to arise, thereby enabling the groom to remain flattened out in the bed, and thus permitting the bride to dominate in height the scene of the ceremony. So much for the mother and father of Miss Leudivine.

But that isn't all to be said about that marriage which left much to be desired on the part of the wife. Miss Cammie's cousin from Donaldsonville once told me of the profound impression made on her mother when arriving one evening at Shadey Grove where she found Carmolyte Picou Erwin on her knees, pulling at Isaac Erwin's coat tails and pleading with him to spare the life of the little colored boy whose brains he was beating out as he swung the child by the ankles against the trunk of a tree. Obviously there were other places than the Hidden Hill plantation of Robert McAlpin which might well have supplied copy for scenes for other Uncle Tob Cabins.

Somebody today said it was thought the last volume of the Washington biography had been rprinted by Scribner from the Freeman notes. I must write Scribner tonight to inquire.....

7620

Thursday, October 13th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Our rain never did develope last night and today was as bright and cool as an Indian Sumer day should be.

You may well imagine I was a little disappointed this noon when Ora telephoned to say she had come down with a terrible cold and simply wouldn't be able to lend me a hand on Saturday. Ora's health is far from vigorous and what with her college work and her family, she is so wise, I think, to recognize the danger of more cold by "staying put" on Saturday.

More clippings from the Baton Rouge Advocate came to hand from the General in today's post. I shall enclose them in this envelope and an accompanying one. I ran through the text of the article very hurriedly and gather it is about the same as the one in the Shreveport paper on the matter of the tour. I was delighted to see that no captions were used in connection with the illustrations in this article. The preseene of the picture of the Melrose of Natchez rather than of Natchitoches Parish cuts mighty little ice and probably nobody recognized the Natchez number since from the text of the article, places other than the local Melrose were mentioned and the casual reader probably took the item in question as merely another one of the Natchitoches Parish places.

In the decors department, I am using big bushes of grandiflora magnolia leaves in the fireplaces both at the big house and at ucca. It seems to me I never saw the red seeds on the cones of the magnolias so fulsome and brilliant as they are this season and their scarlet torches will give a pleasant effect amid the big bouquets of shiny green leaves.



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While fiddling around in the gourd section, waiting for the folks to come for supper, a couple of gentlemen loomed out of the shadows, bringing the piece of marble, marked with the arrow pointing to the S, as in South. I had almost forgotten about the thing but was glad to be reminded of its existence. The job was alright in spite of the fact that the two gentlemen were obviously without imagination. The first thing they wanted to know was what in the world I proposed doing with such a thing. Blandly I remarked that I had in mind using it for convenience of people passing this way, to indicate the path by which they should proceed. That seemed to satisfy them completely or else they knew I must be crazy and let it go at that.

I telephoned Rosalind Aswell after supper and asked her about serving as ucca hostess on Saturday. She said she would be delighted and asked what costume I should like to have her appear in. I tolkd her I thought Hoover apron, in lieu of hoop-skirts, would be arrestingly put Mrs. Wood in the African House downstairs and Clemence upstairs and that will give me an opportunity to circulate a little as there undoubtedly will be occasion to look after this or that and a score of details that cannot be anticipated.

The atchitoches library called me today to inquire about some hisotrical point and I took the opportunity to inquire if they had any record about the final volume of the George Washington biography by Freeman ever having been published. They did a heap of scurrying around apparantly, --at least they kept me waiting for hours, coming up with the "thought" that it had. I got the inquiry off to Scribner last night anyhow, so final word ought to be forthcoming within a week or two.

It seems to me about time for Dumas Malone to get out his next volume on Thomas Jefferson which will be devoted to his years in the Presidency, I suppose. I hope the Library of Congress has sense enough to record both the Washington and Jefferson items without waiting until after publication for a lot of preliminaries before getting the job under way.

And now to the mail and a dab of re-reading of the Murois opus on Dumas and so to bed.....

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Friday, October 14th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Tonight it is fair and air-ish. The promise for tomorrow is for more fair weather and rising temperature. I can stand the latter and am thankful for the blue skies which will certainly add considerably to everybody's comfort during this first pilgrimage.

I tossed together a center piece for the dining room table which was to turn out light, in fact, Calisto. I used the long white soup tureen or baby's bath or whatever it is to hold the stuff. First I cut a bunch of bananas, --one that had a couple dozen green-green bananas at the top, below which was a long stem without bananas and at the end of which was a big purple-magenta blossom about the size of one's fist. Balancing the cluster of green bananas at one end of the tureen above the handle, I let the "goose neck" of the stem run along the bottom of the tureen and brought up the blossom so it would explode over the other handle at the extreme end from the bananas. After that I dumped in dozens of gourds of all sizes and colors and when they are rounded the thing up into pleasant broken curves, I places in a minor spote the red seeded cone of the grandiflora magnolia, half concealing an ear of yellow-orange corn and at the top of the gourd mound, resting on a green striped and golden yellow average size gourds, I perched the loveliest crimson belle peppar you ever saw, and that was that. A tablecloth of extreme elegance, dull red and cream design, as woven by the Madam covers the dining room table and the white tureen with its cargo of gourds makes one wonder by Madam Beaufort has to pay thirty dollars for flowers when stuff grown on the plantation seems to achieve just as effective a note.

The fire places both at Melrose and Yucca, look pretty with their magnolia leaves and red cones and, except for an oblong wooden platter of African origina, heaped up with



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gourds for the Yucca living room, that's about all I did by way of decors although I shall cut some bouquets of butterfly lilies for the both houses at dawning.

I had fun doing a thing for the African House which, for harmony's sake, had to be fundamentally earthy. I rounded up a brick red bit of crockery which I placed on the beaten biscuit machine next to the loom, against the white washed brick of the interior of the building. Then I betook myself to a corn field which had already been gone over by the corn picking machine and there I found plenty of stalks still bearing colorful golden ears on their rich brown stalks. I pulled down the shucks to the base of the ear, making ragged festoons at that point with the shucks. I cut the stalks at 3 or 4 foot lengths so that the glistening ears would stand at different levels in the bouquet, once it was in the earthen jar and then I got some big plumes from the ribbon grass which look like glorified corn tassels, cutting them down from their stems of 15 to 20 feet to around 5 feet so they easily dominated the corn below. And just to give one more autumnal hue, I tied a red bandana handkerchief just below the spot where one of the great tassels emerges from its stem, --and let the whole thing go. Whether Celeste would find that perfectly darling or not, I don't know but I think it would make the grade alright in Lyme.

At supper J. H. said that Millspaugh Drug needed some Town of Hatchitoches and some Grandpere plates and Eugene said he would take them him when he went home. I asked J. H. if nothing was said about the African House which I had heard was out of stock. He said there wasn't anything said about that but asked me if Grandpere and the African House weren't all the same thing. Imagine. And so Eugene took the shipment to town and while E. Roscoe was speaking his piece, Millspaugh's telephoned to asked how they got Grandpere plates instead of African House. That, I believe, is called life. I had tried to telephone Millspaugh's before Eugene left but at that hour the lines are so over-loaded that one cannot even get the operator.

And, getting away from such dullness, may I say how nice it was to hear from Bob. I must drop him a line tonight. And may it be a week end of peace at Lyme.....

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Sunday, October 16th, 1955.

Memorandum:

I have found myself thinking of storm drenched Lyme so often this week end. Every radio adds more particulars to the details of your Carolina born twister. Out of doors must have been out of the question this Saturday and Sunday. How nice it would have been, had one been able to share a slice of our Indian Summer, what with the last two days having been the most perfect I can remember, --all blue and gold and the thermometer just right. The promise is for a continuation of the same sort of thing for the days immediately ahead. I hope fair days may return to Lyme as speedily and as unexpectedly as your week end storm has been.

You will be interested in learning how things rocked along for the Pilgrimage. It all went off wonderfully and, I am told, the ladies made money for the restoration of the old Lemee House. That was the purpose of the tour and that was achieved and so everyone, I gather, is delighted.

Celeste's hostesses for the big house arrived on schedule and mine got here on time, too. Rosalind held down Yucca until noon, Mrs. Wood the African House until 11. The pilgrims began arriving a little after 9. I thought Rosalind a little out of order that she left Yucca at 12 without telling me so that scads of people must have passed through the living room between then and 12:30 when I first learned she had departed to keep an appointment to receive at a house in town. I had roped off the bedroom and I was glad I had done so, what with all the impedimenta there is in here. Celeste had to go to town to join in the frolic of the afternoon, leaving me "holding the bag", as it were. Before I could grab a sandwich at 2 o'clock, the Mayor arrived with a flock of guests and before they left, etc., etc., until 5 o'clock. ut all went along swimmingly and that was that.

Elythe came and spoke to me around 10 in the morning, promising to bring back her guests in the afternoon. She did return by herself but left her guests in the car as they were exhausted from their tour. She said she would be coming up this way one day this week.



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This morning Rosalind telephoned me to ask if everything went alright after she left. Mildred Cunningham called me to say that Rosalind and Blythe in concert at some house yesterday had declared that had it not been for the spade work done by Lestan there never would have been a Pilgrimage. That always kills me when somebody tries to put the success of any project on to one person since it is obvious that it is only by the co-operation of the many that such things are consummated but it was nice of Mildred to keep me advised of the small talk flying around the coffee cups at the college where the late afternoon tea was given. Ora telephoned me just after Mildred had finished. Her voice sounded husky but she is making it alright. She said she had heard that everything went off to the delight of visitors and hosts alike.

This afternoon Carmen Breazeale telephoned to ask if she could bring down a Shreveport man who was doing some research of work for a man who is about to purchase the McAlpin plantation. I gather the man needed some historical selling points. While we were conferring in the living room, Clemence tapped at the door, asking if she might have the keep for the upper chamber in the African House as she had some friends she wanted to the murals. Of course I gave it to her but picture my surprise half an hour later when Carmen and her Mr. Phillips and I went over yonder when we discovered they were making movies in color of the murals. I know not how many they had shot but you may be quite sure they did not finish the job.

The balance of my afternoon was busy with various people, friends of the family, who never dreamed of Melrose visitations until after the tour. At least it saved them a couple of dollars.

Naturally Celeste is enchanted at the success of the undertaking of which she was chairman and is already talking about next year's go-round. At long last Melrose has become a toy, I suppose, for her and that is wonderful. Clemence was in the mural section from 9 until 1 and made a great hit. I think Oakland and Melrose were the most popular plantations on the tour. From town came that news and I heard three different people during the day say: "That last place (Oakland) we visited and this place are the real ones....they seem just like the old plantations we had expected". That seemed to be damning Beaufort by omission.....

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Monday, October 17th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Pursuit of Yesterday might be a fitting title for dozens of biographies from little Marcel on down to little Lestan and the latter achieved it today when the mail arrived for there was a disk, --Echoes of Paris, -- and Lord! Lord! what a flock of yesterday's came tumbling into my lap the moment I set it revolving.

I had just re-read Andre Maurois' observation that people are lucky if they don't explore certain major literary pieces before reaching maturity what with inexperience making it impossible for them to comprehend the emotions described in such works. But if, as in the case of A. Dumas, pere, one gets around to explore such works at the same time one is passing through the experiences set forth in such classics, the effect has a value that can never be experienced if one has already been surfeited by the writings when too youthful to comprehend their import.

And so it is that tonight I am thinking how right is A. Maurois and how glad I am to have attained the age wherein all the experiences of life can suddenly be opened up for my contemplation by the mere turning of the disk, --memories of times, places and people going in to make up the pattern which emerges as one's individual personality.

Like little Marcel's cup of tea, Bergotte's writings, Vinteuil's sonata, so Echoes of Paris quite unexpectedly released a whole flock of emotional chambers whose very existence I had almost forgotten and in a twinkling, I felt the sensations of enthusiasm and satisfaction one undergoes, after strenuously endeavoring to reach a certain hill top, one pauses and looks back to be astonished and delighted at the panorama spreading out gloriously below.

I have not as yet had an opportunity to read the printed material on the back of the jacket of the disk but



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I shall have an opportunity to do so on the morrow. I could make out the larger print on the front of the jacket, --"Echoes of Paris" and George Feyer, pianist. The name of the artist is new to me and I am hoping the jacket may reveal some points concerning him for his rendition of so many old, familiar tunes delights my soul and somehow the artist and the composition seem to fuse with the identity of the giver into a single source of joy to my soul.

I was struck by the fact that except for that one piece one hears on the radio occasionally, "Darling, je vous aime beaucoup", all the other pieces such as Alouette, Valentina and so on, have never chancee to pop up in my radio programs and thus for the first time in 15 or 20 years almost, these un heard compositions again come to the fore and because I haven't heard them over such a long period, they are the more potent, I suppose, in carrying me slap back to the times, places and circumstances operating when last I heard them.

I find myself wondering if George Feyer ever performs on the radio. Surely his artistry ought to make Liberache look to his laurels for Feyer somehow seems able to produce music on the piano which gives the impression that the Piano quintet is going a mile a minute and unable to catch up with him.

It has been such a happy day, thanks to this unexpected success in my pursuit of yesterday, today achieved.

We are having a chilly spell with the thermometer never having moved above 70 today, in spite of the cloudless skies. A cold brisk wind is blowing tonight, even as it did all day, and we are promised a low of 40 tonight, which I can readily believe.

I never did see Celeste today, as she is doing business in town, making preparations for a party she is giving tonight or for Madam Millspaugh whose birthday is on the morrow, --a celebration of which is usually staged across the fence when several

of these women get together, dress up in kitten-ish costumes and call themselves having a wonderful time. J. H. is in Memphis or some such place and the ladies are heading in for a darling time.....

8837

7628

Tuesday, October 18th, 1955.

Memorandum:

"Elegance and dash" are the words employed in the blurb of the "Echoes of Paris" record. It seems to me that hits the nail slap on the head. And I have given the Feyer rendition thorough goines-over. At the moment I am having a battle with the New Orleans Public Library which has dwaddled around and sent me no books for much too long. They don't know I am laughing up my sleeve at them, what with George Feyer to hand to enliven my evenings.

Under separate cover, I am sending along the Library of Congress list which arrived today. I pray you will toss it in the basket on its arrival if things are still at the same pitch as earlier in the month for it certainly isn't worth standing on your head to get this item checked and forwarded. May I suggest that in the space devoted to suggested titles, should you find an unexpected season of leisure to glance in its direction, that we jot down the name of the last volume of Proust's novel, -- "Time Recapture" or whatever it is called. If we could get it read, then we would have suggested in getting both ends and the middle, what with Swann's Way and Cities of the Plain having been issued. By getting the last volume recorded, we might then hope to get the intervening volumes incorporated eventually. Early in November, I shall write the Library directly making this request for the last volume of the novel and then if nothing is forthcoming by the first of the year, I shall start turning on the political pressure again which I dislike doing mightily, since I am all opposed to politicians in the Congressional Library, but if all other means fail, this final one seems excuseable.

The artist came to see me today. She was in quite a gay mood. She expects her telephone to be installed any day now. One can only gasp at the lady's impulses to keep abreast of the times. J. H., she told me, in kidding



7629

her about the new telephone, said in the store the other day:

"Eugene, Clemence has to have a telephone so she can call you at the store, instead of sending over her grandchildren, in order to tell you what groceries I am supposed to wrap and take over to her."

Clemence loved that one.

She told me a white gentleman from Montgomery came to see her yesterday, saying to her that in view of all the money she must be making on her art work, she ought to be able to buy herself a fine automobile and that the once he had driven over in, standing by her door, might be purchased for only one hundred fifty dollars. Clemence said she didn't buy it because she didn't have the money but that she would buy it if she did have that sum, since it would be so handy to go to church in on Sundays. The killing thing about colored folks is that they are just like white people when it comes to feeling a yen for a horseless carriage.

One of the more hilarious episodes of the season happened today a little after noon. Dan came down for dinner and wasn't speaking to anybody. Partaking of a meal under such conditions, as you may have noticed, is always delightful. Shortly after dinner, when Clemence was here, somebody knocked on my door. A gentleman addressed me by name and asked if he might present two ladies. I greeted them and finally turned to the gentleman who obviously knew my name but whom I did not remember and grasped his hand warmly. He seemed a little startled but not half so much as I when a couple of split seconds later, I discovered the gentleman was Dan. It's wonderful what bright sun light and a seldom heard voice can achieve. May little Miss Lee never have a similar experience, for I never came so near "busting" with merriment when it dawned on me how that episode had transpired.

A telephone call from Carmen Breazeale says there's something in today's Shreveport Journal about Uncle Tom's Cabin with Lestan given as an authority. I suppose the publisher will send me a copy, and if so, I'll pass it along. I certainly get tangled up with the strangest characters.

Our thermometer is going to sag to 40 tonight and I'm going to round up another blanket forthwith. Do hope it has stopped raining in your neighborhood.....

7630

Wednesday, October 19th, 1955.

Memorandum:

You can readily imagine how distressing it was to learn on awakening this morning that J. H. had been taken to a Shreveport hospital last night following an accident.

He returned by plane from Memphis to Shreveport where he picked up his car and started for Melrose and the next thing he knew, he awakened in a hospital. It isn't known but it assumed that he must have dozed off. Anyway, he was thrown some 20 feet from his car, picked up unconscious and whisked off to the hospital where it was discovered that his left arm, --the one so often broken in the past, had had both bones broken, just below the elbow, I believe. It was to be set during the afternoon, and that is about all I know except that he talked on the telephone with the store at noon and reported nothing else wrong with him, -- praise the Lord.

The hospital telephoned Dan in Hatchitoches sometime after midnight and he came out and waited for Celeste to be finished with her party and then drove her to Shreveport.

At the speed which J. H. travels, at the abandon with which he drives, at the constant way in which he keeps forever on wheels or on the wing, I suppose it is remarkable that his average in accidents has been as low as it has.

I was interested in today's letter from Rudolph. I might point out that some years back, the Hunts came into considerable property, --an interesting point when one reads in the letter, just to hand, that Minnie, Kenneth's mother, collected her son's insurance and did nothing about caring for her son or otherwise giving the wife a hand. It all sounds pretty rough and I, for one, am holding the thought that the wife is heading in for something ever so much better in the days ahead. I never met the lady and I never heard directly from Kenneth after the war and his marriage but that doesn't seem to prevent me from knowing what a fine person his wife must be.



7631

I had hoped that on tonight's broadcast, E. Roscoe would devote his closing editorial to the conferring of the Medal of Merit today by Queen Elizabeth on Dr. Schweitzer, --a further honor on the world's greatest man which millions must applaud. But he took the religious aspects of Princess Margaret's case on instead.. I thought his closing quotation from Robert Louis Stevenson was excellent:

"There is no duty more often shirked than the greatest one, --the duty of being happy."

For some reason, perhaps the article in yesterday's Shreveport paper about the McAlpin business, there were lots of pilgrims. As the weather was pleasant, it made a good day for them, --Texas, California, Oklahoma and so on.

And then when I thought the sinking sun had written "Finis" on such matters, people came from the Alexandria Town Talk, wanting a couple of pictures for that paper regarding the McAlpin article which had gone on the Associated Press circuit and so had appeared in New Orleans and heaven knows what other papers. They wanted some shots of me, since I had been quoted in the AP dispatches and I was delighted I had an extra glossy print of "The Land of Uncle Tom" which they will undoubtedly use in connection with the big land transfer which started all this flurry. Thanks to little Miss Lee, this item was to hand and may well serve ends further than paid advertisement, I hope.

It goes without saying that I did a bit of baby sitting tonight and liked it. Madam Regard is so sweet. There is reason enough for Celeste to have left her 84 or 85 year old mother alone last night when rushing off the the hospital to see J. H., but I see no point in her lingering on for another night since the broken arm has been set and all is well. But, confidentially, Madam Regard rather likes being alone, I think, and if her daughter doesn't mind, I guess nobody should

So spins out the day as Indian Summer lingers on. I'm so glad J. H. is alright, comparatively and I'm hoping the Manhattan swirl may have slowed down considerably

7632

Thursday, October 20th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Twenty billion times could not begin to express my delight with all the nice things coming my way in this morning's post. What a surprise party.

For some days I had beginning to think that the ribbon on this machine might merit some attention before long but as always, you have anticipated the needs, and with the first appearance of deft fingers on the Yucca gallery, I shall put them to good use.

And may I thank you, too, for having been so thoughtful as to send me the copy of Ebony. It has so many things of interest in it, not to mention Dr. Bunch and the particulars about his career and, --and this I need scarcely mention, --my delight in finding the portrait of none other than good old Harriet Tubman. My delight knew no bounds on encountering the likeness of the lady about whom we had read in Anne's "A Clouded Star" and I find myself wondering if she, herself, --Anne, not Harriet, -- has ever seen a portrait of the character she handled so nicely. I must drop her a line of inquiry, don't you think, as soon as she is out of the Connecticut mud.

And I am delighted to have the names and addresses of the publishers of the magazine in order that I may write them about something for publication concerning little Miss Clemence and Marie Therese. In the past, I have noted that such publications seem to shy away from anything about slavery or an absence of formal education in the characters they write about. But if Miss Tubman can make the grade, perhaps the policy is changing and one can be guided in speaking softly regarding the pedagogic attainments of either local character. It is so nice to have this Ebony issue, holding as it does so many promises of future undertakings.

As for the Hamiltonian influence, I think I shall invest it in some murals which will be all ours. I'd so much like to have the local artist do one of an old fashioned, horse-powered sugar cane mill in operation. There aren't any more but I have seen them before they disappeared and the artist, herself, once operated one. What a splendid historical document, such a pathfinding by such an authority.



7633

Perhaps I ran off the end of the page in my enthusiasm immediately above but what I wanted to remark upon was the rare luck to secure a historical document in the form of a painting by such a primitive artist as Celestence of a horse-powered sugar mill in operation for these have vanished from the local scene and probably will never be brought into existence again.

I had in mind to have her do the sugar mill mural for this corner immediately behind me, one panel being 6 feet in length to run from the chimney to the corner, and a 4 foot piece to run from the corner here to the window. These will be a convenient since for use in other places, should we decide to do so as they will be all ours. To balance these two corner sugar mill murals on this side of the room, I thought it might be appropriate to have two others on the other side of the chimney, -- a 6 foot one from Chimney to corner, and from corner to window, the latter measuring 4 feet, also. I thought the subject for that corner might well be gourds on the vines and gourd harvest, with several ladies and gentlemen of color, picking them, transporting them in wheelbarrow, some tied on to a bamboo pole suspended from the shoulders of two gentlemen, and all more or less heading in the direction of the African House in the background. Don't you think these would make to dandy subjects for the brush of our girl friend. I feel sure you can envision these as clearly as I do and that you understand perfectly when I say that thanks to little Miss Lee, my day has been bubbling over with enthusiasm, both for today and for a billion tomorrows.

On the home front, I continue baby-sitting, morning, afternoon and evening. Neither Madam Regard nor I have had one peep from the telephone in the direction of Shreveport. Perhaps Celeste, like the ladies of The Bluff, hasn't been told what a telephone is for. I am quite sure she is having quite a frolic with her many friends in that city and Heaven knows Madam Regard and I are getting along alright but a telephone call, --at least one call to one or the other of us, would be interesting in so far as setting us straight on when, if ever, the lady expects to put in an appearance. Madame de Montespan telephoned me from Alexandria this morning to inquire news, saying she had heard the initial news bulletins from Dan. She said she had sold her house but was thinking of buying another. I said mighty little.

The news of the death of Mary Daggett Lake, as of last March, was a surprise. Her daughter could have done better than to let me writing her mother 7 or 8 months after her death. But the exercise didn't harm me and perhaps the daughter like reading mama's mail. Strange people we know.....

7634

add Bluff

Friday, October 21st, 1955.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Monday letter in today's post. Frankly, I had not expected a message in view of all the rain cascading upon Lyme over the week end, -- hence the surprise.

But I am sorry to learn of the cold. I am holding the thought that you didn't fight it with such vigor to maintain your office schedule until Friday with the result that when you were able to catch your breath you were flattened out completely. I shall await the advent of a card giving me some notion as to how you have fared during the Monday to Friday interim. But make it only a card when you do take pen in hand for during these busy days every possible second at your disposal should be devoted to doing nothing but catching up on rest and I am holding the thought you may be employing your time for precisely that purpose, knowing full well that I understand perfectly how the swirl of demands upon your strength prevent you from doing so many things you most want to do.

The morning post also brought me the enclosures and I think you will agree with me that La Storm does knock off an interesting letter when she gets around to it. And the more is the pity that one so gifted doesn't make more frequent use of her gift. Unwittingly my secretary provided me with quite a kick by the use of one word in this letter. As you know, Caroline Dormon and I are worlds apart in matters of gardening, what with her impulse to scatter everything helter-skelter, on the theory it looks natural while I incline toward some vague suggestion of order. Hence my delight when the secretary read from the Storm letter about Carrie busy at "landscraping". I must pass that along to Hollywood.



7635

That Marshall woman telephoned from Baton Rouge early this morning to say that she had chanced to be talking with Mr. Ogden yesterday, just after he had seen me quoted in a Picayune AP dispatch concerning the McAlpin thing and that he had asked her if she or I could do something on the same subject not for the Magazine but the Travel section. I have knocked off a few pages and sent along Harry Smith's photograph of the stencil with the cotton and Uncle Tom and one of the glossy prints, also provided by little Miss Lee, of the Land of Uncle Tom plate. I'll let you know if this is published.

Carolyn also said that the head of the Welfare Department in Baton Rouge with whom she had been doing movie business, asked her if she thought I would receive him at Melrose for a conference at any time within the next ten days. It would appear the Welfare Department on the State level would like to put me on the pay role for an exaltation of their public relations affairs. If a juncture between the Department and me could be effected, it would be pleasant all around, I think, although heaven knows what a change in the Administration next Spring might do to the line-up, but several advantages could be realized during the time between now and then at least.

It is good of Carolyn to pass along these points for my attention in advance of the arrival of Mr. Bridges and I, in turn, was glad she needed some additional pointers for her contact with the Governor for the State Archives job. I stirred up several pages of stuff following our conversation and shall send them along in the next mail. I am trying to introduce the Archivist thing on a sufficiently broad basis in order that it will require the services of many people, on the theory that after it has functioned as a segment of the Library Department, it will, by legislative act a year hence, be made an independent agency with an independent staff, don't you think so. I even included a long range proposal that the State Archivist should investigate endless data and documents in Central and South America where documents abound relating to colonial and ante bellum relations with Louisiana and the United States. That would provide Carolyn with an opportunity to cruise off yonder while others could stay put at home, evaluating original documents being gathered into the files of the Archives Department. If any of this should eventuate is problematical but one might as well point to the peaks while engaged in hewing out the trail.

Celeste will leave in the morning for Shreveport and will be holding him down, once he is back in the freedom from the hospital.....

7636

Sunday, October 23rd, 1955.

Memorandum:

Our lovely Indian Summer continues. May some of it have spread to Lyme, shedding torrents of sunshine to scatter away all colds.

Celeste went to Shreveport Saturday morning and brought J. H. home about 2 o'clock. He spent the afternoon at the store. I never saw him look so well. This is probably due to three or four nights of sleep, --probably the first consecutive go at the pillow in 40 years. They have the cast rigged up in the fashion which seems to be quite the mode, these last three or four years, with a little stick at the hip running at a 45 degree angle from the body so that the elbow, at the same height at the shoulder, leaves the broken part of the arm, between elbow and wrist, in an elevated position, reminding one of a cop bringing traffic to a halt. This position must be so uncomfortable for the patient there's bound to be some good excuse for the thing being rigged up in such a fashion, although I can't imagine what it is unless, possible, there is too much concentration of blood in the arm and hand if placed in the old fashioned way so that it might rest along the waist.

But J. H. takes it all in his stride, jokes about it, declares it doesn't inconvenience him and that he feels no pain at all. He would say the same thing, were it killing him.

J. H. said Saturday morning was the longest in the hospital. Children don't go to school on Saturday, it may be recalled, and so, in a gush of over-doing this, Sister sent all three of her offspring to call, although they had been there the day before but not on their own hook. He said they were alright separately but the three together made a perfect Bedlam out of the place, as one may well imagine.

interruption.....



7637

Clemence is a sight. What with a pretty moon, she decided she would drop by to ask about the murals I had spoken about to her. She had hoped I might have done something about them. I had. They were properly measured and properly "marked", which I did in darkness and which probably are wonderfully cockeyed, but marked they are, with a big old gourd vine that will run along the sides and over the door, leading into the bathroom and plenty of ladies and gentlemen toasting gourds off to the African House for a festival, which will be in the panel just after one turns the corner to the South wall, between the corner and the wooden barred window, just over the big old iron safe. The artist in the artist is something special when it really begins generating restrained enthusiasm in her particular case and she wanted to toat one of the panels home with her. But what with the moon and all, I thought it would be easier for her to lead the way through the bamboo with me following behind toasting both, as they aren't heavy, one but 6 feet by 4 feet, the other only 4 feet by 4 feet. Right now, I suppose, she is probably as busy as a bee, opening paint pots and fiddling with gusto at the job she is so impatient to undertake. And so the Hamiltonian items are having a beginning and only Heaven knows what they will look like when the artist has finished with them.

I know you will be amused at the problem I have been having with the potted freesias. They are sprouting nicely but every few days I have found that the pots are bereft of all bulbs and I have had to re-plant them. I was puzzled by the doings until the other evening, just after the kittens had finished a bowl of warm milk and then it was I discovered that with all of Natchitoches Parish, among the larger in the State, the kittens simply had to go to the trouble to assist me in my gardening efforts, unbeknown to me, by jumping up from the nice soft ground where they had meandered and make use of the freesia pots in responding to their cosmic urge. No wonder I kept finding sprouted freesias out of the ground, the kittens seem to do such an excellent job in tidying up when they have completed their more intimate requirements. Needless to say, the pots have found another resting place and the kittens have returned to the good earth outside the earthen vessels.

.....  
The Reverend Fathers from across the river came just after we finished supper across the fence tonight, for which I am thankful since it gave me an excellent excuse to pull out earlier than usual, although the moon was well turned on, another factor which enabled me to be at home base when the artist arrived, impatient to round up her next undertaking. Come to think of it, 1955 will really be quite a year in her career, what with all the murals and a telephone, too.....

7638

Monday, October 24th, 1955.

Memorandum: A chill waves, moving very fast, began flowing over us about 8 o'clock this morning and although the sky remained cloudless all day, it never did get up to 70. The winds have died down and the moon is big and round and lovely. The thermometer will sag to about 38, it is said, and I have tucked the freesias into the protecting shelter of the little conservatory by the side gate. The cold snap is traveling so fast, according to the Weather Bureau, that it will have passed us by 8 in the morning and then Indian Summer is scheduled to begin all over again.

There was quite a batch of mail today, none of which I have read, what with all the secretaries apparently gone under cover because of the cold. It would be interesting to know what Mrs. Farley O'Brien has to say in her letter about their plans for heading this way. One letter seems to be from Houston, probably from the people who have recently dumped half a million bucks into the McAlpin property. I assume they may have been reading the Associated Press story and from that probably got my name. There seems to be a letter, too, from Shelbyville, Tennessee, and I suppose that may be another example of what happens when one of the major wire services begin reporting news across the nation. Charles Scribner also writes, probably to tell me something about the final volume in Freeman's biography of George Washington, --and so it goes.

As for myself, I penned a line yesterday to John Hall Jacobs, asking that if he has any influence with his Canal Street branch in New Orleans, supposedly designed to supply TalkingBooks, and asking that he would try to persuade his staff in that quarter to send me a book. I haven't had anything since the Maurois opus on Al Dumas, pere, came to hand which must have been two or three weeks back. J. H. was up and down this morning and had the plantation spinning before breakfast, after which he was off to town and back again before anybody could turn around, and thence into



7639

the various rural sections where Melrose operations are in progress. It still seems a bit odd to see him, as though directing traffic, his left arm elevated like a cop's ordering a halt. Only this cop doesn't know the meaning of the word, and I'll bet Clyde Claude Emmett Davis never did so much driving in a single day in his life. Tuesday night is gambling night and I have no doubt the ancient ritual will be in full swing on the morrow, --just one week from the time he was hurrying home, probably to participate in a game, when the accident occurred.

Last evening's atmosphere was so non-static I could get the Atlanta broadcast of "Meet the Press" with unusual clarity and I was glad to hear Governor Knight of California, as I had never heard him before. Obviously he is an accomplished politician and his radio personality excellent. He was even able to side-step the Nixon thing without doing any damage either to Nixon or Knight and, under the circumstances, that is bound to require real political acumen.

I was delighted to be able to have the latest example of civilization as practiced in Mississippi, to pass along to J. P. R., the other day. According to my radio, after it had done the Presidential health "without complications" had brought one up to date on how the British romance was faring and had done something about North Africa, the Mississippi date line was given, --I'm sorry I forget the name of the town, wherein a certain Mr. Somebody had won the annual tobacco spitting contest, the winning blast having landed 18 feet 2 inches from the spitter who declared that that wasn't his best and that two or three years back at a like session he had let drive a blast that had traveled 22 feet and some inches. Anyway you slice it, there's nothing quite so culturally wonderful as hill-billy-ism when it really gets the decks cleared for action.

Some man from San Francisco communicated last week with the Chamber of Commerce, saying he had just read about Hatchitoches and the Cane River Country in a Christmas Festival booklet from last year and asking if he might have an opportunity to see the Cane River country to advantage at this season of the year. He was given an affirmative answer and today the Chamber telephoned to say the man had arrived and wondered if I would see him sometime tomorrow. I would. How people do get about at the drop of a hat.....

7640

Tuesday, October 25th, 1955.

memorandum: How nice to find your letter of the 21st, and what a surprise. It goes without saying that I am deeply sorry to learn that the cold really did gallop up on you with such speed and that it flattened you out so swiftly. But I rejoice that you appear to be on the mend and I am holding the thought with all my might that you did not get all tangled up in things again before you were sufficiently strong to prevent the thing from making a return call. It is silly to advise you to go slowly for I realize that once the treadmill gets to going, or at least, once you hop on to the thing again, the momentum will carry you along at what ever speed it wills and that it will be necessary for you to keep in step to keep up with it, but I do hope with all my heart that you didn't hop on again until you had enough strength to keep up the pace.

It was so kind of you to give me the glimpse of the Kane chapter which I had heard but once, --Essae Mae reading to Miss Cammie and me, --at the time the book was published and I had forgotten how the thing was twisted. I do recall that he accounted for the presence of the mulatto race in this section by saying that the canes parted and a new race emerged, or some such nonsense. Even Dr. Goebbles could never have thought that one up.

Somebody, and I cannot recall their identity, mentioned that he was autographing books in Shreveport a couple of weeks back but that the conclave summoned to his performance numbered only a few people which sounds both strange and good.

I am particularly delighted that you asked for a Hunter cotton picking. If and when I can find the key to the trunk holding some early Hunter treasures, I shall see to it that it goes forward to you. As I recall, it is a very subtle and very charming item and I think you will love it. It's so designed as to suggest something which might have been fashioned for a special motif for some house like W. and J. Sloane. I even think you could expose it to the casual eye and that no one would consider it more than something torn from a magazine. A little later, I shall ask her to do another



0137

7641

contemporary cotton picking rendition and I think you will find the composition of ten years ago and the present quite interesting by way of design and technique. The contemporary one, --the earlier one is about 1942, will have to be painted a little later, however, as the lady at the moment is up to her hips in some murals which she has taken on at the expense of some flock of orders she has to execute for various people, but, as she likes to paint murals for the Melrose setting, she disdains all other proffered gold for the Hamiltonian investment we are now in the midst of. She passed this way this morning and again this noon, asking me to come over to see how she was doing at her house. My busy morning prevented me from getting away, --that man from San Francisco was here, and in the afternoon I was gummed up in something or other and so she made a third round and I dropped everything and skipped across the cotton patch with her. The job she is doing for our gourd panels is delightful. I think it has gayer coloring and more charm than anything yet attempted and although she has put a lot in, the things don't appear too crowded, what with the panels being respectively 3 by 4 feet and 6 by 4 feet. When this set is completed, it will be installed in the corner over the iron safe and above the door leading into the bathroom, lending a note to the boudoir that will be sort of a rendition in childish Africanism that will delight everyone who loves such business as do we.

Today's incoming mail was heavy again and I read but your letter and one from Robina. I skimmed through a couple of shorter ones at a gallop but didn't get to Irma O'Brien's as yet and some of the others. I hope the O'Brien-Storm contingent doesn't blow in before I get to read their letter.

The letter from Lyme made me so very happy and I was deeply touched by the reference to the moon, seen but a single time, at just that particular place over the Empire State building. How rich have been the years between, what a promise they hold for those of many a tomorrow. Through my mind ever since reading the letter, the lines of a poem I don't remember too perfectly, keep running through my head:

"I love so many things, the sea, the purple night, the slivery moon,  
With all its blue immensity,  
The little thrushes liquid tune

And loving these things as I do, the good, the beautiful, the true,  
How can I help but love you, too.....

0137

7642

Wednesday, October 26th, 1955.

Memorandum:  
The thermometer was down to 37 this morning but a cloudless sky and the absence of breezes shot the temperature up to 80 by afternoon and so the lovely Indian Summer jogs along.

I suppose the metropolitan papers may or may not refer to "Operation Sagebrush" or some such, as they are calling the impending doings at Camp Polk, some 50 miles to the West of us. There may have been some reference in the Papers, too, as regards one gentleman named Burden of Lake Charles, La., who is refusing to sign the Governmental form, permitting the Army to carry out its war games on his property. I forget the acreage involved but I believe the Burden holdings number up into the thousands, perhaps 40 or so. Be that as it may, every body else has signed and I suppose condemnation proceedings will eventuate in Mr. Burden signing also, or witnessing the war games on his property regardless. The property itself is just old worthless cut over land which isn't worth anything to begin with. Neither was Mr. Burden, to begin with, although up until this writing, so far as I know, he has never been cut over the way his land is. Everyone around here who can remember back to the 1920's and 1930's recalls Mr. Burden as one of the nicest men they ever knew. He operated a little old general store off in the back woods behind Gorham somewhere and few people, comparatively, knew him. But hill billies did and so did Huey P. Long, and the latter went into some kind of arrangements with Mr. Burden, it is said, and before anybody knew what was what, Mr. Burden was getting rich, as well as swinging votes for Mr. Long, or perhaps because of that fact, and in a short time the man, Burden, who rented the little cross roads store, was in possessions of thousands upon thousands of acres, building himself a mansion in Lake Charles and generally getting on in life much faster than most back woods stores would provide. It is this Mr. Burden who is holding out against the Government and refusing to let them make use of his broad acres, the way people, including J. H. do. I thought you might be interested in this thumbnail



7643

Sketch of said Burden if you chance to run across his name in the papers. It was said tonight that the name of Camp Polk is to be changed to Fort Polk and that there will be a permanent military establishment in that area, --Burden or no Burden.

Carmen Breazeale telephoned me today to say somebody in Brownsville, Texas, wants to write up the local artist. She is sending me the letter. She also said tanks for the Camp Polk festivities are being unloaded from railroad cars in Natchitoches and that 150 small tanks passed her house last night. The big ones are supposed to arrive on the morrow.

Blythe and the sisters Pringle passed this way this afternoon. They had stopped at Clemence's and picked her up and deposited her at the camp to scrub the floors against a Sunday and a Tuesday frolic at the camp. I was sorry to learn that somebody had broken into the Rand camp since last they were here. The intruder carefully removed the screws holding the lock and left the lock and screws in a little dish beside the door. A thoughtful housebreaker, I must say.

Clemence would have finished the gourd festival panel, I think, had she not been called away for she was working on it with gusto when I passed her house at noon.

My day was so busy, I had no opportunity to do anything on my own hook but I did manage to run through a few letters in part. I read Ima O'Brien's as far as the paragraph where she said the trip East was indefinitely postponed because of some new arrangements about the TV scripts on which Farley is working. I am just as glad that they will be coming later, when, I hope, there will be less activity hereabouts.

The letter from Shelbyville, Tennessee which I enclose with my response is another page of the incredible Uncle Tom thing which continues to seethe, as it has since 1852, and probably will be seething for another hundred years to come. Everybody seems to want to get in on the act, it would appear. That's one nice thing about a legend, so many regions can claim something which, after all, doesn't much matter anyway.....

7644

Thursday, October 27<sup>th</sup>, 1955.

Memorandum: How nice, how very nice, to find your letter of Saturday in today's post.

It was almost the next best thing to a long chat and I experienced the same joy in re-reading it as I did in going through it on the first go-round.

I have thought so often about that dream you mentioned and have thought how very pleasant it is that the contact was so happily established before the case holding the Constitution. So often the dream tends to fade out before the desired end has been attained and somehow I like to think of this one as being portentous of other equally parallels of reality.

I'm so glad you may find an opportunity to drop in and see me. I think its dash and elegance will appeal to you as much as it does to me, --particularly the verve of the rendition at the end of each side of the disk. When writing to Nina about George Feyer, I asked if she had a list of other recordings he has made. I should be so curious to learn how he handled something like, say, the Nutcracker Suite or some of the Strauss waltzes. Frankly, I don't think Herr Feyer could ever give me as much pleasure as has Caballero and his Strauss waltzes and I doubt very much if the Feyer of the Echoes could rival that record. I once mentioned I heard over the air, --Guy Lombard's piano team doing Tale of the Vienna Woods, but never the less, I still find myself curious to learn if Feyer has done in the same dash and elegance some of the tunes of which we are so fond.

I am delighted to have the latest account of the strange doings of our little feathered friend. Like moody people, birds seem to have their times of ups and downs and I am always astonished at what they can think of to convey to human beings in just what a state of mind they chance to be in at a given moment.

One of my friends came to see me this morning before breakfast, --Elam's brother, a youth of perhaps 20 summers, and



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a sweet soul but definitely on the mental side of the man in "Of Mice and Men", --the dull witted one. The boy was frightened half out of his wits when, just as he tapped on my door on the back gallery, he caught sight of a pole cat between the doorstep where he stood and the edge of the gallery. He picked up something and chunked it at the poor skunk, --and hit it. The poor thing didn't die until this noon and I told a long story about the kindness of pole cats to the youth which seemed to move his sympathies wonderfully. I asked him to come back this afternoon and I had him assist me at the funeral in the white garden. I doubt if another pole cat ever eases on into heaven through that particular human agent again.

You will be delighted to know that the Hamiltonian gourd panels, --two, -- are painted and are at Yucca. The artist came at noon, bearing the second one and, as always when she attempts something that will involve two efforts, I am inclined to be a little anxious until the final thing has been accomplished. Perhaps I shall get to shellac them on the morrow and I must chunk the purchasing department about the moldings I ordered from town early in the week. I must round up some white paint, too, for the moldings and perhaps next week I shall get Will Rogers to get the gourd side of the room in order while, beginning on Monday, I hope, the artist will start in on the sugar cane and Syrup making section for the other side of the room. On the store gallery this morning, before many of the workers had left for the r labors, I put out the word that I hoped they would cast about and see if they cannot find me an old cane knife somewhere up or down the river. As there will be a couple of men cutting cane in the picture, I thought it would be nice to have a couple of the real knives to hang on the wall, perhaps above the panel or perhaps rest on the shelf below it, as cane knives in this region will soon be a forgotten utensil and I thought we might as well round up one or two which show the wear of years of use. Perhaps I shall get none, perhaps I shall get a dozen, --one never can guess, but lots of people on the place seem to get a great kick out of furthering my collecting propensities and I should be not at all surprised if ten years hence somebody proudly presented me with a cane knife on the strength of this morning's announcement.

I'm so happy you expressed the desire for some gourds. I sent some of modest size, or rather I packed some today and they will go forward in this mail. I put in a couple of magnolia cones, --in an envelope but the red seeds may all fall off before reaching you. I placed a paper sack inside the box so you may easily open the box, transfer the contents to the sack and dispose of the cardboard box.....

7137

7646

Friday, October 28th, 1955.

Memorandum:

At this writing, our Indian Summer remains with us, the thermometer in the 80's during the day but we are promised a drop of 40 degrees tonight. ut we were promised rain for today, too, but we didn't get it, although Hatchitoches did. But we did get some high winds during the morning which would have been splendid to knock off pecanes, had there been any pecanes to be knocked off.

The day's post brought the enclosures. I think of Bob so often. I'm wondering how things will turn out in his present line of endeavor. Perhaps they will eventually be able to live in the country, near Manhattan, as I think he would prefer having the little one brought up outside the city. ut, as I understand it, they have their own house fired up so much to their convenience and liking in New Orleans and they love the South so much that perhaps they will get things rigged around some day so that they can resume the trends they had so happily established in the Crescent City.

The letter from Carolyn speaks for itself. I sent her some suggestions for the Archivist job so it would reach her last Sunday, thinking that she needed the McAlpin stuff before Monday but apparently I was mistaken. The letter was cancelled on Wednesday, suggesting she either mis-dated it or forgot to mail it, what with all the social life going on, not to mention her business enterprises.

I suggested in my letter to her that what with the annual pilgrimage now established for the Hatchitoches country, it might be an excellent time to sell Hastings House the idea of doing a pictorial thing in the Hula Hula manner, and calling it "Hatchitoches, Louisiana's Oldest Town".

People seem to like that "oldest" part of the thing.

At the same time, I thought Hastings House might be sold the idea, too, that Melrose should now merit a parallel volume, calling the thing, "Melrose, Louisiana's Noblest Plantation". I use the word "Noblest" merely because



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I can't think of any other word in which the superlative can be employed, since something like "Interesting-est" could scarcely be used, and I want to avoid the use of "Most". What with the Hunter murals to be added to the Melrose story and some of the illustrations brought up to date and a dab of extra mulato business aded to the thing, I should imagine it might have an opportunity to get published, riding along as a companion piece to the Hatchitoches book. Well, we shall see what can be done about it eventually, although that Marshall woman always has so many irons in the fire, it appears difficult to ever undertake anything, --with a hope of carrying it through, -- when the work required is likely to be somewhat prolonged. The presence of Fort Polk as a permanent installation will mean that lots of officers wives will be forever pulling in and out of Hatchitoches along with their relatives, and the Hatchitoches and Melrose books ought to enjoy a measure of popularity thereby, I should think. As I like maps for end papers, I might even keep Fort Polk in mind when contemplating production.

When forwarding the little gords in the last post, I intentionally omitted sending the African House plate, thinking that it might be easier to manage the items on the receiving end, if they arrived on different days. And so the African House will go forward by the same pot that carries this letter to you. I slipped a paper sack in the package, thinking you might find it convenient to discard the carton in which it traveled. I also put in the latest issue of the Louisiana Historical publication, although it may or may not contain anything of interest. I do not want it back, of course.

I learned today that Fugabou's daughter, Helen, who used to be secretary for me on occasion, is about to become a mother, poor little old thing. The papa is said to be one of the mulatto Cloutiers whose wife cooks for the priests. I believe Helen joined the Catholic Church a while back and so the whole thing sounds wonderfully reminiscent of Father Regis somehow. Probably the welfare will assist the unwed mother and one thing is certain, the mulatto Cloutier can't support his own family, let alone a second one. Poor little old Helen.

While I was shallacing the gourd murals this afternoon on the front gallery, the wind was so high, it swung a real gourd, suspended from the eaves, so high that it slipped from its nail and crashed on the brick pavement. And a gourd 4 feet in length makes quite a pop when it thus shatters.....

7648

Sunday, October 30th, 1955.

Memorandum:

A lovely week end in these parts, -- cool but wthal supny. One notices the absence of the humming brds, however, and I suppose they all are busy setting up house-keeping in Venezuela.

he enclosure was an unexpected pleasure, coming out of Briarwood. It's odd how that gal thinks nobody should mind if she doesn't write but that she has a perfect right to expect letters from those never getting responses from her.

I was contemptable in my response in which I inserted a paragraph about the telephone, saying that, unlike her, the telephone on my desk didn't distract me, being so fortunate as to be neither famous or popular and therefore not distracted by incoming calls. But I did congratulate her on the expansion of her flower book and chatted away at a great rate about scads of nothings. I followed her line in one respect, --never making a peep about the James Pipes Registers. It seems a little odd she never referred to them, doesn't it.

Dinner today was pleasant. I must make a mark on the wall. The General and wife drove up from Baton Rouge, arriving an hour before 11:30, when we break bread. Everything was lovely. We were but six at the board, the two brothers and their wives, Madam Regard and I.

After a leisurely creme de cacao and demi-tasse, I lied and said I was expecting a telephone call, realizing the call had not been made on me. But before I got to the side gate, the General came galloping after me, asking if he might see the murals and have a little chat. We didn't have anything in particular to touch on but we enjoyed our sitting and a little later, J. H. joined us for a walk about the gardens which both gentlemen found to be looking pretty in spite of the absence of flowers, snatched by Jack Frost during the past week. It's always a pleasure to see the General.



7649

On Saturday the three Wentk offspring blew in at 7:30 and lingered until after supper when the physician who operates the Cloutierville clinic every two weeks, picked them up and whisked them back home. What a Bedlam the three of them do make when they all get together in one place. J. H. at supper demonstrated his unusual courtesy or lack of forethought by asking if they wouldn't like to stay all night and go back on the bus on Sunday afternoon. Fortunately they demurred. What with the S. G. Henrys scheduled for Sunday dinner and the necessity of someone driving them to town to catch the bus in the evening, it seemed to me much better all around that they did not accept the invitation.

I am so glad you mentioned Heritage magazine, -- a publication I have heard about but never seen. It would seem to me, however, from the pamphlets it sent out last year, one of which came to me, and from what Dr. Rand has spoken about it, that the Melrose area might well have been made for such a vehicle for presenting particulars of kindred particulars. Perhaps it might serve as an appropriate stage for the article I have been thinking about and may have mentioned before, -- the translation of the title of the Anatole France: Voyage au tour de ma chambre, -- Grandpere Augustin Metoyer's grandfather clock, its story; the Revolutionary musket and powder horn over the door, portrait of The Black Swan; pictorial map of Louisiana Territory; Gayoso's iron strong box or safe; the rug of Canton yellow cotton, raised and woven on Cane River; the gourd murals of little Miss Hunter; the reading machine; the pictorial coat of arms of Louis XVI's and Marie Antoinette's little d'uphin; this desk on which so many books have been written; the four poster bed whereon so many people of white and cafe-au-lait have slept; the mahogany armoire ravished by the Yankees and bearing one substitute side of walnut; the barrel chair belonging to the Ambassador to Burma, etc., etc. The shelved window with all its treasures could extend the thing indefinitely, of course and numerous other gadgets, and all this assortment might provide an article that Heritage readers might relish. I'm so glad you mentioned the magazine.

But the hour advances and I must be ungirding my loins against re-girding them on the morrow. I shall hope it has been a pleasant week end at Lyme....

7650

Monday, October 31st, 1955.

Memorandum: Where in the world do you reckon October went. Before we can turn around, we shall probably be asking where in the world went 1955.

The enclosed letter speaks for itself. I shall respond by Special Delivery that we shall be looking for Robina and Miss Nellie on Thursday for dinner. Thursday is always a busy day and I suppose the coming one will be up to standard. I am hoping that Marshall woman, if she is coming this way this week, may not decide on Thursday as the magical moment, what with several points I should like to take up with her before she puts in an appearance at Baton Rouge. Perhaps she will stick closer than usual to her timetable, as outlined in her last letter and so arrive here on Tuesday or Wednesday, I hope.

Blythe and a flock of Alexandrians are supposed to be here on the morrow and Wednesday has something on the docket although I forget now what it is. Then, too, I am expecting Will Rogers to upset the boudoir utterly one of these days with his carpentry in getting the gourd murals in place.

And speaking of the gourd murals leads me to say that I am at the moment full of misgivings about the panel having to do with the sugar cane business. As I passed by Clemence's house late this evening and she was going hammer and tongs on the one that is intended to go slap behind where I am sitting. It was so primitive it nearly knocked me down. But as it was but a third finished, perhaps the whole thing will come into focus better when she adds some more dabs. Tomorrow she is supposed to serve assaulikon at the Rand camp for the festivities there and I'm holding the thought that she may not sit up all night, struggling against fatigue, to slap off the mural to get it out of the way before heading out for the Rand pot and pan department on the morrow.



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I heard no news during the day and so do not know when the world was advised concerning the statement of Princess Margaret that she would not marry Capt. Townsend. That may end that romance but certainly talk will go on concerning the decision for decades. If Winston Churchill has a finger in the pie, --and may he well have, this situation makes a perfect opportunity for the Queen to raise Captain Peter to the peerage some months hence and thus her sister could be honored for her steadfastness to the Church of England while permitting the couple to achieve almost what popular demand seems to have hoped. It might be well to let a little time elapse between now and then during which the Church of England could overhaul certain of its tenants, tossing out that barbaric business about divorced people not being able to marry. Surely the Catholic Church has a better method since, as in the case of the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough, it can always be discovered that the divorcees really weren't ever actually married after all.

I read a little last night from the Abernathes: Burr Conspiracy. It has much data of interest in it for me. Both Aaron Burr and James Wilkinson were such bags, it is difficult to say which was worse but I guess Wilkinson was. Wilkinson spent quite a bit of time in Hatchitoches while Burr was rigging up their mutual venture in the East. It was interesting to find, among many others in Hatchitoches in 1807, none other than that same Pike who returned to Hatchitoches, following his trek into Colorado and his first sight of the Peak now bearing his name.

The more I read, the more impressed I am by the seeming almost impossibility of getting anything printed without errors of one sort or another. I stumbled over one in this book, --which actually is of no importance at all but which is an error. It says on leaving Hatchitoches in 1807, Wilkinson went to Hatcher where he and his wife stopped with the Stephen Minors at their home, Concorde, a rambling house which still stands to this day. Now Concord, as we know, was not a rambling house but a huge well proportioned, square-ish sort of building, set in magnificent grounds. And we know that it was destroyed by fire in the late 1920's, --at that time owned by the Kellys of Melrose. The steps of the old mansion have been photographed and printed so often, it seems strange that the author of this book who has dug up wonderful particulars, should have stubbed his toe so completely on such a non-essential picayune.

mail. And now I must roll up my sleeves and get going on some mail. Our Indian Summer continues on the chilly side.....

7652

Tuesday, October 1st, 1955.

Memorandum: The Burr Conspiracy

It's full summer again and I like it.

I didn't quite finish The Burr Conspiracy last night but perhaps I shall tonight. When Aaron got to Hatcher, I, of course, ran into some familiar names. As a matter of fact, I ran into some familiar ones before leaving Pittsburgh, for, --and this was all news to me, --I learned that Thomas Butler, Miss Louise's grandfather and builder of The Cottage, was one of Burr's most active military lieutenants, rounding up recruits on Burr's behalf for the adventure and generally handing ends to get the project going. The troubled waters in which Burr was fishing lay in the fact that the States and Territories in the Mississippi Valley, had the barrier of the mountains between them and the 13 original States on the Atlantic seaboard and there was much discontent among many people who couldn't get their products to market except at exorbitant carrying rates, making it impossible to compete with eastern producers of the same commodities. And then there were those in Kentucky especially who felt that New Orleans should be the logical capitol of the middle west, not to mention the general unrest that always characterizes a newly settled region. We have seen, too, in Grandpere Augustin's letter of 1803, the resentment against the uncouth American immigrants and it was in such a set up Burr thought he could dislodge the middle west from the east and so become head of an independent county but he used the story that he planned to invade Mexico to conquer that country, and no one will ever know which of his followers thought they were heading toward a new Western State and which thought Mexico was the object of the conspiracy. Be that as it may, --come to think of it, --I never did chance to hear either Miss Louise or Dr. Pierce Butler mention the name of Aaron Burr although both spoke often of Thomas Butler.

And I learned, too, that the great Postlethwaite of Clifton man at Hatcher was Burr's agent in Mississippi. My old friend, Alexander Postlethwaite, was 94 when we used to talk about his grandfather, and neither he nor his niece, Mary Postlethwaite, an historian, ever mention the Burr business, which isn't too strange.



7653

So much for the literary evening. On the social side, Blythe came to see me about 3:30, bringing three ladies of Alexandria whom I have known for years. They didn't linger but wanted me to have a supper of excellence, -- huge slabs of elegant looking ham, much fancy sandwiches, baked beans, home made rolls, a huge tomato-avacado-fried Chicken salade and three kinds of desserts, - cake, pudding and stewed fruit in wine sauce. Sometime between now and tomorrow's breakfast, one or the other of my friends is going to dine high, for there is three times as much stuff as I could possibly get away with, and besides, I know plenty of youths without such toothsome fare.

I took an hour off late this evening to put a coat of white paint on the 40 or 50 odd feet of molding that will be used for the Yucca murals and by tomorrow morning I shall be able to apply the second and final coat. I suppose the services of Will Rogers will become available about Wednesday, or rather Thursday, when Robina and all the rest are here.

The Wenks brought me an orange cake on the week end and I got around to take it to Clemence this afternoon just after supper. She said she had but two more children to dress and the big house (Melrose) to finish and the syrup making panel would be complete. I looked at it and discovered she had altered it tremendously but I think it will not be so disappointing as I had felt it might yesterday, -- in fact it may be rather nice, and what is most important, of course, is the fact that it is a pictorial record of a vanishing mule powered cane mill, painted by an authority and even though its interest may not be vast artistically, it will be wonderfully precious as a document, probably not to be found anywhere, and, as the General remarked about the African House murals the other day: "Each passing year will make them more precious".

At dusk dark, Mitchell, the ace, came to see me in response to my message. I handed him a razor blade. Little Grandpa, the gray and black tortoise shell young tom cat, sat on the doorstep waiting for his supper. I put him in a boot, Mitchell made a deft swish of the razor blade, and Grandpa was a tabby cat. He scooted off into the banana plants and I came in and washed my hands and picked up a glass of milk for the other cats, but who but the new tabby was sitting on the doorstep awaiting me. Little Grandpa must have thought it a game and had come back for more. And now to the mail and thence to Mr. Burr at Windy Hill and so to bed.....

7654

Wednesday, November 2nd, 1955.

Memorandum:

From where I sit, it would appear that tomorrow ought to be quite a gang-up. Will Rogers will add to the hurly-burly by installing the murals while I shall be handing ends with the five or six guests, -- that's assuming, of course, that everyone who selected Thursday for a visit will arrive and that Marshall woman will show up at the same time which is to be supposed, since she is scheduled to touch at New Orleans and be in Franklin by Friday for an inspection tour of Kay's property down that way.

The weather remains awfully summery, what with the thermometer continuing in the mid 80's although the weather bureau says it will drop to 40 tonight. There's so much static this evening that trying to hear any thing certainly hends one's ear, what with a tornado said to have been rampant in Arkansas during the afternoon, and the cold mass of air obviously stretching up to s of tumult among the ether waves. The promise is for fair skies and a cool 65 for tomorrow and that ought to make pleasant traveling for Miss Nellie and Robina.

The enclosures aren't much but I send them along regardless. The clipping doesn't appear to be dated. It is from the Natchitoches Enterprise of October 27th, 1955. Several people have said that although neither the Mayor nor I knew the new Editor was contemplating making Natchitoches his home, it was we who unwittingly sold him the idea that this was the region in which he should locate. Odd how we exert influences occasionally without even suspecting it.

And between this paragraph and the above, I received the admonition of the old adage: "Don't cross your bridges before coming to them, for Western Union



7655

telephoned from town to say a telegram from Shreveport  
for me had just been received reading:

"Trip Postponed Because of Miss Nellie's Illness.

Love, Robina".

And so that simplifies things wonderfully in the mural  
installation Department for me and since Miss Nellie works  
at Northwestern State Hospital, I'm sure she is in  
capable hands.

People in the Hatchitoches area say they have given up  
trying to listen to TV and have gone back to their  
radio sets in as much as military doings in the current  
local war games clutter up the programs with ghosts which  
talk a military lingo that simply doesn't harmonize  
with whatever programs chance to be coming their way. I  
believe the war games last only a month and then everyone can  
turn back to his TV set again, I suppose

I picked up the cane syrup mural this morning and  
it didn't turn out so badly as I had feared it might.  
In diminutive size appears J. H., his broken arm much  
in evidence. The Madam, in white shirt waist and black skirt  
is discovered working in her garden while a small figure  
on horseback is none other than Dr. Scruggs, his pet  
buzsard balancing precariously just behind the doctor,  
houncing along on the horse's rump. The  
artist had already started work on the final panel, -- a  
scene painted at the end of Yucca on the sunken garden side.  
When I sketched in the fountain, I indicated a jet in  
the middle of the rectangular pool, the water from the jet  
splashing back into the pool. I was a little  
startled this afternoon when I passed by the artist's  
house again to see what progress she was making for I  
discovered that slap out of the middle of the pool where  
my fine jet had been sketched in, a banana plant was  
growing. Bananas like lots of water but not quite that  
much, but of course I said nothing. But it certainly  
just goes to show how conving a wonderfully clear my spouting  
jet must have been. Heaven alone knows what whisey will  
strike the artist tonight as she paints on the final panel,  
but the other three are all shellaced on front and back and  
ready for their installation on the morrow.....

7656

Thursday, November 3rd, 1955.

Memorandum:

And so the Thursday to which I had looked forward  
with so much anticipation of hurly-burly turned out  
as quiet a product as one could imagine. Except for some  
lovely people from Australia who are flying back  
to "down under" on Saturday, there was a vast paucity  
of people. Will Rogers did put in an appearance about  
5 o'clock to get some notion as to what tools he would  
need for tomorrow's labors, so it appears that at  
long last the murals will get placed.  
Needless to say, I shall be delighted on more than one  
score, for I must say that keeping a flock of  
4 by 6 foot murals on the floor so they will remain flat-  
flat makes navigation about the house something of  
a hop, skip and jump affair.

Except for a harmless and no account sprinkle,  
we got no moisture at all, in spite of quite a  
cannonade from on high. The thermometer dropped  
46 degrees in a short time and in spite of  
clear skies and a brilliant sun today, it never  
climbed back any higher than 55. We are promised  
a freeze for tonight and I raced a little  
against the setting of the sun to get some of the  
more delicate moveables, such as the freesias, into  
the projection of a building. By noon tomorrow,  
I suppose, the banana leaves will turn from their  
gorgeous green to a marvelous chrome yellow before  
turning to an uninteresting brown and rattling with  
every breeze.

Little Miss Hunter brought me the final  
panel this morning. It is the view of Yucca from  
the West and isn't very good but it supplies a  
sort of childish record of certain personalities, including  
a self portrait of the artist, a black gentleman and  
a white one, being of Julius Bron and me when we were  
working on the sunken garden, etc., etc., but of  
no inspirational quality although the piling up of shapes



8228

7657

in the form of Yucca and a huge magnolia towering above it does give an impression of tonnage.

The artist so much likes the gourd panel fitting above the door into the bath room that she asked me to mark her one sort of like it from the section of the panel that will be cut out when the panel is put into place. I shall do a rough sketch of the shelved window here by my desk with the various treasures decorating the shelves, and this door or window will provide an excuse for the gourd vines to be trailed on each side and over it, which is what she wants to do, I think.

I never did hear anything from Cousin Carolyn and I'm hoping she may now be back in New Orleans since the J. P. R.'s are expecting her to do the bayou tour with them beginning tomorrow and I think all three of them will enjoy that although even the Louisiana bayou country will be "air-ish", I suppose on the morrow. But warm weather is predicted for Saturday again so their outing should not be too frigid.

I'm reading a book entitled "Angels, Apes and Victorians" or some such and find the style delightful although the subject matter isn't too fascinating, --biographical sketches of people such as Aldous Huxley, Charles Darwin and so on. Last night I was amused by the chapter on Huxley's courtship, centering around a young lady he met in Australia while on a scientific expedition in the South Seas, and I discovered that this recent reading of people living "down under" stood me in good stead today when the Australians arrived.

The enclosures contain nothing of interest, but I enclose them regardless, thinking they might serve to indicate the trend of things generally which, in the case of Madam Marco, appears to be on the happier side, praises be.

I shall forego the pleasure of dipping into "Apes, Angels and Victorians" tonight as I propose clearing decks before calling it a day, --rolling up rugs and parking them on the gallery, pushing furniture, --not only chairs and tables, but reading machine and typewriter into the living room so the aforesaid Rogers can have a men- his saws, levels and other paraphernalia when he gets placing the murals. And after that has been achieved, no more innovations for me, I hope, until the present season is far behind.....

8229

7658

Friday, November 4th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Clear and cold but only 40 tonight as opposed to 32 last night, and 32 means the cannas, banana leaves, etc., look as though they had been cooked. We are promised a fair and warmer week end and may it be the same in Lyme and environs, especially the environs.

Today was one of those in which we preen our feathers for what we have accomplished between dawn and dusk forgetting that whatever has been achieved is probably do to much spade work in days preceeding.

The murals are finished and in place. I think they look nice. The corner behind my desk is primarily documentary and therefore not to arresting as a piece of art but pretty enough. The corner on the other side of the fire place, however, is really delectable and I know you will like it when you see it.

One distinctive feature of Yucca is the fact, -- generally not noticeable to the casual eye, is the fact that none of the walls are straight, some bulge and the doors tend to slant one way or another. This presents several tricks, as you may imagine, when trying to cut panels so they will fit snugly and not swerve out at you in places where the mud walls, behind the composition -- covering boards, tend to produce horizontal wave which no one sees when portraits are hung on the walls but which become ever so evident when the straight lines of the panels bring these undulations into view. But the work is accomplished and looks attractive, I think.

I may have mentioned I rounded up a sugar cane knife, -- an ante bellum one, and I have it flattened against the wall above the syrup making panel. I shellaced some of the gourd this afternoon and may not suspended them

I got another job done, too, and it was a little



7659

difficult, for I chipped out some bricks, cutting some  
down the bias, in the gallery floor half way between the  
boudoir and living room doors and set the arrow into  
bed of cement. It is a little striking, the white marble  
against the dull orange red of the antique belium pavement, but  
300 years ago Quatorze demonstrated that brick and marble  
go nicely together and the tiny echo on the Yucca gallery seems  
to prove the point again.

Carolyn telephoned from Shreveport or Marshall  
about 6:30 this evening. She reported her father had  
had another mild stroke, his second but is getting  
along alright. She said Kay had telephoned her and  
that they had put off the bayou boat tour until next  
week end. She said she might pass this way next Thursday  
on her way South but would be quite busy between  
now and then as she had found a log cabin somewhere and  
expected to have it erected on Storm Lake early in the  
week. She said the Baton Rouge Advocate of Sunday next, --  
November 6th, I suppose, will carry an article about Robert  
McAlpin and me. -- Strange bed fellows ----. And she said  
she had arranged that the article would appear on the desk  
of the head of the Welfare Department in Baton Rouge.  
She said the post cards in color of the Lemee House had  
arrived and were being forwarded to Mildred Cunningham  
on the morrow from Marshall, I suppose. That will make  
them a little late for the 1955 Pilgrimage Tour but  
well in advance of the 1956 one.

I had coffee across the fence today. Celeste seems  
much more relaxed these days and Madam E gard continues to  
be her own sweet self. J. H. continues cheerful as  
always and says he is getting used to the cast and  
so sleeps better at night. The clerk told me today that  
Dan has been un ee the last of the bottle all week.  
Today's mail wasn't much. The letter signed by Sterling  
Evans is interesting only because he is an associate, --  
a partner, I believe, of the man who purchased Hidden Hill  
for half a million recently. Don't you think the partners  
should present their respective wives with at least  
a dozen Land of Uncle Tom plates each.

Well, so much for today and the week. My mind  
will be "hoovering" over it. Lyme so often over the week end....

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Sunday, November 6th, 1955.

Memorandum: What a pleasant, quiet week end. I so much hope it may  
have been so at Lyme. Saturday's cold and sunshine gave way to warmth and  
a flock of no-account showers on Sunday, --but not enough dampness  
to keep away pilgrims. Saturday's post speaks for itself, being limited in  
pieces but length in the single item coming to hand. The can-  
cellation date is November 3rd and the arrival date of Friday  
or rather Saturday, is a bout right. The details would  
make quite a clear outline for the friend who said Carolyn  
needs somebody to organize her activities. As I read it,  
I was impressed by certain paragraphs, not so much by what they  
related as by the backdrop of the telephone news wherein it  
was stated a log cabin had been purchased and would be reconstruc-  
ed on Storm Lake this coming week.

The episode of the deadline for the Baton Rouge Advocate is  
so typical if so many undertakings and it makes me tired  
merely thinking about such rushes. The lady works so hard and  
plays so hard that by some miracle the two seem to  
almost balance the one off against the other, --but not  
quite, and for most people, and I know for myself, the mere  
thought during an entire week that an article was scheduled  
for appearance and was put off and put off until the last  
moment would contribute to more exhaustion than the  
energy saved by postponing the writing of it. Of course  
the jaunt to Waco for the football game was as  
puzzling to me as the taking of the apartment in Pirates Alley,  
for while each in its different way held something pleasurable,  
still all that was involved in each couldn't possibly make  
the energy and expenditure involved worth while. Probably  
my whimsies are just as perplexing to others but however that  
may be, New Orleans and Waco are not two of the curious  
points appearing in the agenda.

I telephoned Mr. Beckerman, the new owner of The Enterprise,



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on Saturday to suggest a crusade for his newspaper which might elicit approval from many and would be opposed by none. He had not heard on the radio that a franchise has been granted to one of the air lines to begin a service between Shreveport, Lafayette and Lake Charles and was delighted to learn about it. It seems that although Natchitoches is on a direct line between Shreveport and the cities to the South, planes don't stop unless the town has a population of twenty five thousand. I raised the point that while Natchitoches has only about fifteen thousand people, the Parish of Natchitoches has about fifty thousand people, many of whom frequently travel by air and that in considering making Natchitoches a stop, the Board determining such matters should take into consideration the population the town serves and not the mere number of inhabitants within the town's limits. Raymond Breazeale who has charge of the Natchitoches air port had breakfast with me on Friday and I got many details from him regarding potentials and suggested Herr Beckerman get in touch with him. I figure that since planes from half a dozen bases pass over the house every day, we might as well get the benefit of their service since we have to put up with the drone of their engines and said Beckerman concurred heartily. We shall eventually see what we shall see.

The artist came to see me this afternoon and was supposed to have brought me a cotton picking picture but she explained that she had "let it get away from her", meaning, I suppose, that some customer got there about the time she was finishing it. I told her to go on back home and try again and she departed in glee, what with several boards I had rounded up for her, some of which I had made some sketches on, --a gesture she likes, since I think she finds painting my gourds better than drawing her own. I shall be curious to see how she gets on with such doings. Of one thing, I am quite certain, I shall never recognize any parenthood in the final results.

Static is so constant tonight, what with another cool mass of air moving in that I shall content myself with my Reading Machine instead of trying to catch up with Meet the Press. I'm still fumbling around with Irvine's account of Mr. Darwin and his Origin of the Species, a dull enough subject but so well written that I am enjoying the thing. I'm hoping little Miss Lee got a whack at a literary evening, too.

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Monday, November 7th, 1955.

Memorandum: Clear and rather chilly, with the day's high in the 50's and tonight down to about 46 I suppose.

The frost has finished the gourds and I gathered a few today. There was one about the size of a football, perhaps a little larger, that has delighted the few of my colored friends to whom I have shown it. It is a replica of a duck swimming along and turning its neck a little to see what's cooking. It grew on a fence, -- a wire fence, on which other vines grew and somehow got twisted into this odd shape. As in the case of all such vegetables, pumpkins, melons and gourds, the spot where the flower started the whole business is almost always directly opposite the stem of the fruit, on the bottom. But because of the curious twist given this particular one, the spot where the flower was is not at the far end from the stem but about half way between the neck of the bird and where his tail should be. I left five or six inches of stem with the adjoining tendrils at the top of the neck, which gives the duck like gourd the appearance of having one of those tiaras such as the peacock displays as a sort of top knot. The gourd is a light yellow and is as pretty in coloring and as odd in appearance as anything I have run across in the gourd section.

Today I discovered that one of my dumber secretaries, either through intention or dumbness, and quite possibly both, has been skipping an occasional sentence or paragraph in my letters. I don't mind this so much since it affords me an excuse to re-read the more interesting letters but at the same time it seems a lamentable fact that secretaries are so hard to come by and those rounded up aren't particularly trustworthy in at least this one instance. Do keep this circumstance in mind, for while I propose henceforth to double-check, still it may on occasion be that there is a slip up, and so do not fail to re-mention some point, should I fail to remark upon it.



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While I think of it, I want to voice my concern over what appears to be a growing tendency on the part of many speakers on the radio to eliminate the first vowel in many words. Off Hand, I don't recall many of them, but I am frequently being struck by the omission. Perhaps I can best demonstrate by calling to your mind the word, Believe, as pronounced by E. Roscoe Murrow when he says, "This I Believe" and someone like Mr. Truman who pronounces the same word, Believe", seemingly omitting the first vowel completely, ending up in a pronunciation that, if spelled phonetically would be written Blive, so that Mr. Murrow's two syllable word, Believe, becomes almost if not entirely a single syllable, Blive.

Perhaps it is because in Louisiana one is likely to hear more mid Western speakers than one would in the East or Far West and it does seem to me that in the Missouri region I have heard it most. But every once in a while some program from the East or West coast will have a speaker inclining more and more toward the elimination of that first vowel, although it may often be, --I haven't noticed, that the person speaking on one coast or the other, may hail from the Middle West. As I do not see articles appearing in the papers and magazines, I may be but voicing a phenomenon that has already been well covered in print. But I mention this tendency and would ask you to mention such an article if one may have in the past or ever should in the future come to your notice. I always thought Theodore Roosevelt carried things a little far when, perhaps in humor, when meeting some one would say: "Deeeeelighted". But in this day and age when we lean more heavily than ever upon the spoken word, it seems to me commensurate care should be taken of what has almost become in some quarters an almost elusive quality in our vowels.

Some of the Louisiana radio station announcers are flagrantly inept at pronunciation. Sometimes, if the news is dull, I count on my fingers the number of mispronounced words, and sometimes I run out of fingers. That isn't extraordinary but when people attain national net work status, I think we should be concerned if they "bliver" or do not "blive".

The artist came to see me this morning, bringing me a picture she had painted last night. It was so much like Gauguin (Gauguin), I was amazed, --for the millionth time. She moves unwittingly from one type to another, never having seen or heard tell of this or that type of painting. J. P. R. has a paint of flower prints that are so Marie Laurencin that you would swear they were. It's all so odd.....

7664

Tuesday, November 8th, 1955.

Memorandum:

A typical November day for this region, cloudy and cold, with low hanging mists that occasionally give a dab of moisture not unlike the spray of a wave, --not enough to do any good but sufficient to gradually soak one if one remains too long in the open.

Election must have provided the Post Office with an excuse for a sort of holiday for although the local carrier made his rounds, he didn't have any 1st class mail sack for this bend of the river. I suppose that will eventuate in a double dip on the morrow.

I used the "air-ishness" of the weather as an excuse to undertake a flock of in-door rearrangements and tonight I feel tire from the humdrum exertions but with a sensation of a sauce of satisfaction poured over the fatigue as one sometimes does when wilfully making a tremendous confusion in one's habitation and then, almost miraculously, effecting some sort of order before day is done.

Between two and three o'clock this afternoon, my boudoir looked like the fall of Rome. I had taken down the draperies in order that I might put a coat of white paint on the rods, --they had been black iron and I converted them into white so they wouldn't be noticeable where the rods projected a little above the white molding of the murals. The marble top of the chest of draws was carted onto the front gallery for a good scrubbing and the several draws stacked up in the middle of the flower to see if by re-shuffling, I couldn't get more plunder into them. This meant the moving of the big Louisiana screen and chairs and my reading machine, all more or less into the middle of the room when, Lo! J. H. arrived with Mr. and Mrs. Lester Hughes. You may recall that Mrs. Hughes is a sister of Miss Julie Prudhomme, both of them being nieces of Lestan Prudhomme. As for Lester, he is a nice person, probably one of the few people in the country who is both District Attorney and an amateur painter. Surely his sense of the artistic must have been enormously impressed when he encountered the boudoir.

But there was space in the living room to collapse



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and we all had a glass of wine and some good conversation before their visit was concluded. This was the first time J. H. had seen the Yucca murals and both he and Lester obviously liked them. Lester fell in love with the varying types of gourds and wants to come back to talk books and to pick up some gourd seed.

Although Madam Hughes and Celeste are buddies, nobody went next door to call. Perhaps Celeste wasn't home anyway. I am sorry to report that the era of good feeling on Celeste's part has come to an end. The Pilgrimage influence which began about the 15th, seems to have lasted just about 3 weeks, which, in a way, I suppose, is quite a triumph. At coffee this morning the put on another act about being annoyed by visitors. For J. H.'s sake I shall continue to participate in the coffee hour but it affords me something less than pleasure.

On the plantation there is much giggling and tittering among the colored folks. For years, Little King has been hoping to have a son and four times in a row he has become the proud father of a daughter. But today the old stork flapped over the cabin of Mrs. King Solomon, -- Little King has been in Germany for about 18 months now, -- and dropped a blessed bundle, -- a boy. I believe it is the custom of the Red Cross to cable fathers in the Army to announce the birth of a heir.

I feel so sorry for everyone concerned. In this case, as in so many others, the youth and maiden were married one day and the husband headed out for the career in the armed forces the next day. While stationed in this country, Little King got home once a year and four daughters came along in ordered regularity. But when the Atlantic separated husband and wife, the rhythm, shall we say, continued and now after a year and a half absence, Little King is, at long last, the father, in a way, of a baby boy, and how things will turn out from this point on, Heaven alone knows, but here's holding the thought that the poor little boy doesn't have too heavy a burden in life to bear as a result.

I think I shall fold up early tonight and do a bit of serious radio listening to see what's cooking in the various towns and states where people cast ballots today and tomorrow night there will be more than ample broadcasts by the leaders of the respective parties, interpreting today's voting results to show that the figures mean advantages to the parties which did or did not get most

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Wednesday, November 9th, 1955.

Memorandum:

How nice, how nice, how nice..... As anticipated in yesterday's memo, today's incoming mail was an avalanche and may I tell you how happy all of it is making me.

One thing or another prevented me from spending much time with secretaries but I don't mind that so much since it will afford me an opportunity to go over the whole thing at a subsequent sitting when I can take up each matter individually, and so far as the recorded section is concerned, I can take that up any old time, and have done so several times as between the arrival of the post and this moment.

It is so good hearing from you and catching a glimpse as to how things turn. Needless to say, I was tremendously impressed by the coincidence in the cases of our respective associates. In neither instance will we probably ever know the details but at first glance it would seem that the merchant-planter was luckier than the other gentleman and although the latter is mending faster than the former, still that was of no particular advantage since the whole thing had to be broken down and begun all over again.

In the morning's post came the copy of American Heritage, -- the first copy I have seen. And isn't it wonderfully contrived. The subject matter appears so appealing and the paper, print and illustrations so fine. By chance, on opening it, Uncle Tom was the first picture I encountered and it reminded me of the time when Lindy Jones inquired of me how Uncle Tom looked. If only she had been so lucky as to see such an illustration. It goes without saying that I am going to be wonderfully impatient until I can begin at the beginning and read the whole business from front to back, -- there are so many things exciting my curiosity. I shall be so happy to learn something from associates about the policy of the publication. I am under the impression that since it does not carry advertising, it pays nothing for its articles, what with the suggestion of a bright idea, a drawing, a little which it is turned out. There are several things I have in mind



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that we just made for such a publication and I should be so happy to have such material preserved in such a elegant vehicle. It's going to be fun in the days ahead, casting about to decide on which of the things I should like to employ to this end.

It is pointless for me to tell you how utterly charming I find "Echoes of Vienna", for you have probably heard it, too, as I gather from your sweet card, and that makes the disk twice as precious. Herr Feyer certainly has a marvelous artistry and one of the nicest things about "Echoes of Vienna", so far as I am concerned, is the fact that one can follow it up, --as I have already done, with Caballero's Strauss's Waltzes and the two join together so neatly. For Feyer's selections and rendition are, -- how shall I say it, --pure Ringstrasse while Caballero's is quite Schoenburn, and these two entities, dove-tailing so marvelously, and one being a part of the other, seem to make a Viennese combination that is unbeatable both for what is evoked and what is served up, -- each so wonderfully delicate and different and yet so completely harmonious, the one along with the other. What wide-spread joy is ours when Science and Art combine to provide such delights both at Lyme and Melrose, providing such a perfect talisman for sympathetic hearts where ever the music is heard.

Under separate cover I am sending along a couple of pages from the Baton Rouge paper which came to hand today. My secretary said the article was continued on page 5 but as I had no one to assist me when it came time to clip, I have just torn out both pages and enclosed them in a separate envelope. I have not read the article as yet, what with several other things in the written line demanding my attention, but the introduction of a ghost in historical matters never impresses me too favorably but I'm hoping there wasn't too much spiritualism in the piece.

Carolyn telephoned to say she will make a quick round on the morrow, and from the enclosure, you will notice Robina and Miss Nellie will be coming too, even as had been planned for last Thursday. But the morrow doesn't worry me as much as it would have last week, what with the murals now being on the walls and not all over the floor for people to stumble over, as they were last week.

it in another letter, in today's paper again from Paris. I get the impression he wants to see me about something, and there was a reference to my guidance, referring, I assume to the festivities transpiring on June 15th in Savannah. Things are going along nicely in that quarter, I believe, and I'm so glad for them.

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Thursday, November 10th, 1955.

Memorandum:

A perfect Louisiana winter's day, the temperature about 65, the sky clear-clear and vegetation looking brown-brown.

I am still relishing all the nice things coming to hand by yesterday's post and have just had the pleasure of re-reading your elegant letter before a secretary scampered off the the honkey-tonk. And last night was so delicious, what with American Heritage on my lap and Echoes of Viennarevolving about close bye.

I am particularly glad you got to experience such a wonderful presentation as you did in the Moliere piece. I think it one of the gayer comedies and remember with so much pleasure how I used to see it performed at the Odeon, following a late afternoon stroll in the Luxembourg Gardens and dining on the terrace of an excellent small restaurant giving on the gardens and feeling certain, as I do even yet, that the delicacy with which the Odeon performances were presented in those days could never be surpassed by any other presentation for sheer charm and delight. I am so glad you had this opportunity to see the same thing in Manhattan.

This Thursday turned out fully as busy as I had anticipated but did not follow the precise pattern I had envisioned. While busied with callers this morning, I was distracted by the presence of a figure of a gentleman meandering about the garden in front of Yucca. I know not how long he was there but quite a long time. First of all, I assumed he was somebody who had stopped at the store to ask if he might walk about the place and I hoped he would see all he wanted to and depart. But finally, at 11:15, --we dine at 11:30, he knocked at the door. Momentarily, of course, I was expecting Miss Nellie and Robina. Callers were therefore definitely out of order. The man said his name was, --of all things Mr. Ballatch, that he was an inspector for the Welfare Department but of Baton Rouge up at this way on business and that Mr.



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Stewart of the Welfare Department in Natchitoches had told him he ought to stop to see me for a visit since Mr. Bell's wife, who was not with him, is French. Imagine. Well, Mr. Bell was an exceedingly dull person and therefore one had difficulty in shaking loose. Had he not told me he was with the Baton Rouge office of the Welfare, I should have said No to begin with, but in view of the chance that I might be entangled with various people, including said Bell, should the impending job materialize, I thought it better not to push him too hard. I finally got rid of him, however, but only after I pointed out that the guests I was expecting had arrived.

I thought both the Shreveport ladies looked wonderful and we dined promptly and then had a nice two hour chat. I heard nothing of especial interest but there were many things the ladies wanted to know about, --things done here and what the various members of the family were up to and so on.

I had plumbers to look after as soon as they were gone, and as Carolyn had said she would be here between 4 and 5, I stacked up a few papers of article potentials so we could get some work done prior to 5 o'clock. She telephoned about 6 from Shreveport, saying she had been delayed and would pass this way about 8. I know not if she plans going on to New Orleans tonight or not although I am under the impression the New Orleans "children" are expecting her to make the bayou boat trip on the morrow. But that is not my problem and so I shall let them stew about that.

Naturally, I welcome this unexpected interlude to get caught up with my mail, after having a little chat with you and I am holding the thought that I may even have a chance to hear a couple of Echoes of Paris and Vienna before rolling up my sleeves to get some scripts pounded into shape or at least skeletonized.

The enclosures are of no particular interest although I thought the note from Kenneth's wife sweet and it is nice to hear from LaParlange again.

Tonight's radio speaks of rains heading toward the general direction of Lyme, -- heavy rains. I hold the thought the water may all have run off by the week end.....

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P. S.

Sorry about the Denhome margins. I arrived at the bottom of the page before I realized it was just in the offing. I hold the thought of a season of peace and relaxation over the Sabbath at Lyme.....

Friday, November 11th, 1955.

Memorandum:

A lovely day, all blue and gold, with the thermometer in the pleasant upper 70's. I made the most of it by getting a flock of stuff aired in the sunshine, for we are promised more moisture and cool spells for the week end.

Carolyn arrived late last night and left this morning, not for New Orleans, as I had supposed she intended doing but rather to some place over on the Sabine River where a sugar mill, powered by ozen brought up from Mexico, is operating for what the Shreveport Times thinks is the final go-round. It is her business to get pictures and a story and so New Orleans is put off for next week.

We did no business regarding articles, although she did have a few things Patty wanted me to know about, and this she related in some detail, as Patty wants me to write Bob with the under-lying thought that I may influence him, without seeming to exert any pressure, in favor of returning to New Orleans. Patty, it seems, in view of her delicate condition last summer, was not told that Bob had been advised that the New York hospital business of his father, required his presence, so that his revelation of the necessity, after the birth of the child upset her somewhat. Patty feels that Bob's condition, --nervous tension, may increase in New York where he isn't by nature suited for the facts and figures which head of a hospital requires and she wants him to return to Louisiana where he can do things which he likes better and where, with their own home, they can bring up the child in a fashion she feels would be better for the child and much better for Bob's happiness. I shall lie and say that I have mis-placed Bob's address and therefore am writing a joint letter to both, asking Patty to forward it to Bob, and that will give her an opportunity to withhold it, should it not suit her. It seems Patty feels Bob considers me his best friend, which in a way seems odd but which is understandable, although



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we know each other very slightly except for the correspondence we have had. Still, I have never been one to suppose that calendar calculation counts much in matters of depth of affection and understanding and the brevity of our friendship seems to be rather deeper in Bob's estimation than would be the case, were friendship required to cement itself with years on years of acquaintance.

Pat smashed up his car night before last, it appears. He was heading home from town around 10 o'clock when in the eaufort neighborhood, a car just ahead of him suddenly swirled off to the left, --both cars going in the same direction. The car was driven by a lady, --a sort of lady, -- being none other than Mrs. John Prudhomme, who shot her husband two or three months back and still contemplates having a baby almost any old time now. I suppose, if he goes to Baton Rouge or to New Orleans for the game this week end, he will use J. H.'s new car. Why he doesn't fly, I know not, although I believe he is tired of his plane.

Last night about 9:30, the Editor of the Enterprise, Mr. Beckerman, or whatever his name is, called me to say thanks for having started the crusade about getting Hatchitoches designated as an air stop on one or two of the major lines passing overhead daily. It seems particulars about the efforts being made to secure this service are recorded in this week's Enterprise but I haven't a copy to hand but will send a clipping, should same come to hand. Carmen telephoned today to say she had noticed my name among others in the article but how I got into the picture, other than having made a nod, I know not.

I did a little more reading last night from the "Apes, Angels and Victorians". The subject matter is so well set forth that one doesn't mind if there's lots of re-hashing of the Darwin relativity theory. In speaking of Aldous Huxley's dispassionate approach to matters, the author cites the fact that his sister, Elizabeth, had a son of 15 in the Confederate Army, --I believe I have heard Elizabeth lived in Nashville or some such place, and Huxley wrote her saying that while his heart was with the South, his head was with the North and that no matter which side won, slavery would have to be abolished as it was uneconomic, impracticable and freighted with immorality. He was so right.

That belle from Shelbyville who wrote about Uncle Tom came back at me with a letter of six pages which I may or may not ever get around to read. It's wonderful how little encouragement such people require to impell them to cough up a book.

Mildred Cunningham in a gay mood, sent me the first card from her order for a likeness of the Lemee House. You might toss this one out and I'll send an unaddressed one later.

7672

P. S. No. 2.

I re-open the letter, written earlier this evening, to insert this second post script because of a somewhat baffled state of mind concerning none other than Geore Washington and Charles Scribner.

After my stirring the stick in New Orleans the other day, an avalanche of books descended upon me, including two cartons from Freeman's George Washington biography. A year or so ago, I had asked that when the final volume, --No. 6, appears that it be sent me. Twice in the past year they have sent me the volume devoted to Washington's military career and, as I have digested it, in the past, I have naturally returned same.

But when this came to hand today, I thought I had better test it just to be sure, although, you may recall, Charles Scribner wrote last week, the final volume wouldn't be published until 1956, as I recall.

You may therefore readily appreciate my asotnishment, when I got around to do some reading tonight, I discovered that the volume coming to hand is volume VI of the Freeman biography of Washington with an introductory note concerning the death of Mr. Freeman and a notation that this volume was copyrighted by Charles Scribner in 1954.

Do you wonder I feel a dab perplexed.

Obviously Charles Scribner must have been talking about another volume on Washington and yet here is a long introductory note about Freeman's death at the beginning of this volume, and as it's sub-title, --the book's sub-title, is Patroit and President, and since Washington died so soon after his retirement, it seems unlikely another whole volume should be scheduled for the time following his Presidency. Be that as it may, I have volume VI of Freeman's Georege Washington and I'm going to digest it with relish, even though I make not sense out of the sequence of Freeman's death in 1953, the finishing and copyrighting of the book in 1954 and the Scribner letter saying it will be published in 1956. I return to "Apes, Angels and Victorians" which being closer to hand in time, may prove not quite so confusing.....



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Sunday, November 13th, 1955.

Memorandum:

I believe the radio said this morning that Shreveport yesterday had the highest temperature in the nation. I can readily believe it, both as of November 12th and 13th, since both days it was 99 at this bend of the river. Needless to say, bulb plants are jumping out of the ground and the potted freeshias are flourishing wonderfully, about 4 or 5 inches in height.

The warm weather seemed to have a happy effect across the fence, too, where there seemed to be much gaiety and perhaps tonight's delight stemmed in part from the fact that the ladies gave dinner at 11 in order to be off from Alexandria to spend the afternoon as some social thing and didn't return home until long after dark. How wonderful that getting in the big road can produce such desirable effects.

I got around to do some reading last night, --not much, but enough to read for a half an hour on the Freeman biography, as written by Dumas Malone, --none other, -- for the preface of the Freeman biography of the sixth volume of George Washington. The sixth volume is entitled "Patroit and President" and as it was scheduled to be the final volume of the work, I took it so to be. But now, after reading the Table of Contents, I assume that the Freeman associates must have concluded the present volume at the end of Washington's first term, along about 1793 and that an unannounced volume 7 will be forthcoming to wind up the second term and Washington's brief retirement to Mount Vernon and his death. I'm certainly glad I got that figured out, --I hope correctly, although much of it is assumption, based on the necessity of making something jibe with the Scribner letter regarding the final volume to be issued in 1956.

Saturday's post brought a letter from Dora which I shall read again before enclosing it within the next day or two. He asked me what I thought about a cook book, possibly entitled the African House Cook Book, based on some newly "discovered"



7674

cook book notations. He also asked if I thought Clemence should be dragged into it, etc., etc.

I read the letter very hurriedly and got off a long response which I sent to town Saturday afternoon so he would have my response on Monday.

I told him quite frankly that I had had in mind doing a cook book ever since news came to hand that Esso's Louisiana map was to bear a likeness of Melrose on its cover, feeling that the Esso map would advertise the name widely among Louisiana tourists. I said I thought the word, African, frightened some people, --the prejudiced ones, and therefore I can thought of callin the book The Melrose Plantation Cook Book, with the title spelled out on the roof part of a sketch of the African House, and under the door at the left the three words, "By Clementine Hunter" and under the right door, "and F.M." Then I wrote a page or two of what I had had in mind for an introduction, opposite a picture of C. Hunter sitting alongside Lestan at his desk, dictating recipes, with the thing starting off something like:

"The best French is spoken, not in Paris, but in Geneva, and the best Louisiana receppes, as Lyle Saxon, Roark Bradford, Alexander Wollcott and other discovered may not be found so often in urban centers as in the remote, romantic region of Louisiana's Cane River country....."

And so on and so forth, and since Dora said the costs of publis the book could be secured, what did I think about it. Well, I told him I thought so and that he could use his idea exclusively or mine exclusively or could jumble up the two as he pleased. My letter got so long, what with the Preface and all, I must write him another tonight, detailing some ideas as to which recipes should be included and other details. He envisioned something that would sell for about a dollar. I envisioned something that would sell for about two dollars. I want no encyclopaedia but something sufficient for an inexpensive gift item as well as a tourist thing. And I am quite sure that the source from which the money could be secured for printing a dollar book could with equal ease supply the costs of a two dollar item.

I think I think a Melrose Plantation Cook Book could have a large sale in this area and in New Orleans, too, especially in view of the impending Esso map, --scheduled for pre-holiday release, and what I should like most about it would be not its own success but the fact that if it did enjoy a popularity, it might inspire the same source that under-wrote its printing to do the same thing in behalf of a Hatchitoches and a Melrose picture book. What detours one must sometimes employ to arrive at a desired destination. And so to the mail, and may your week end have

7675

Monday, November 14th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Our heat wave continues, --still in the upper 80's. I wonder what the 140,000 soldiers around here doing the Sage Brush thing think of it, what with them being attired in the winter garb. But in Arkansas a cold mass of sit is poised to move in, should ever the gentle p breezes from the Gulf play out. It will be better for vegetation if cooler days should come along soon since such things as cannas, butterfly lilies and the like, --flattened by the first dash of winter a week or so back, are already putting up new leaves just as though it were spring.

The Lesters, who were here during the summer sometime or other, were mentioned today in table talk when somebody said they had lost one of their firmest friends in the airplane-disaster near Denver last week which took 44 lives. Today's shocking news that the plane had been destroyed by a time bomb, set off by the youth who insured his mama's life and then sent her on the death flight seems somehow even more shocking.

And speaking of planes, the clipping about the proposed stop off commerical ones at Hatchitoches has just come to hand. I shall enclose it herewith if I can set my hand to it and I think I can.

At 7:30 Carolyn telephoned from Hatchitoches, saying that she had a few points concerning a script she had done for Hollywood a couple of years back on which she would like some advice. I suggested she come down immediately without stopping to see Mildred Cunningham on some other matter. Twenty minutes or so later, the beam of an approaching flash light announced her advent, --I thought. But the bearer of the torch turned out to be Rosalind. She had gone to Alexandria in the afternoon on some dental matters, expecting to remain for additional work on Tuesday but as everything was attended to at a single sitting, here she was, heading back toward home and stopping off for a dab of chit-chat with me. A telephone call came in from town and while I was on the wire, Carolyn came.

And from that point on, the evening became one of those endurance



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tests, for Rosalind lingered and lingered. Eventually, after exhausting nearly all my bag of tricks at prying people loose, she made a gesture to depart and I hope she wasn't too taken aback at the cooperation she received from me. And so I handed her to her car, the bright beam of her torch being very helpful as clouds veil the stars tonight. It was inevitable, of course, that on being neatly set in her horseless carriage she should discover that she couldn't find her keys. I think that is always so good at just that point of encouraged departure. Eventually I found them back at Yucca and finally got the lady under way once more, and so, and somewhat belatedly to the California script Carolyn leaves in the morning at 5 and I was accordingly glad the time required for advising her on the method of procedure on the California thing didn't consume too much time.

We even had time to inspect a couple of possible shots of Clemence and me, should we decide to use the two of us in the cook book. If properly placed, with me at the typewriter and her facing me, so that her features would present a profile to the camera, the shot could take in the mural on the wall behind me at just the place in the mural where a lady of color is stirring the bubbling sugar kettle, - a note which seems wonderfully appropriate for the subject matter under discussion.

I fished William Irvine's "Apes and Angels" thing somewhat regretfully, for although Charles Darwin and Thomas Huxley as characters are well enough known as to require scant re-reading of their careers, Irvine has done such a smart job in presenting the material that the subject matter is secondary in importance and the manner in which the business is presented the important thing, --and a pleasureable one, too.

I am turning over in my mind as to what is the best thing to do about the George Washington biography. About ever fifth word in the first several records can be understood. There may be several reasons for this, of which may be ascribed to the American Printing House for the Blind of Louisville which made the records. But because several new books, brought out under their auspices of late, have been in large measure unreadable, and since those issued by American Foundation for the Blind in New York never exhibit this faintness and mumbling, it seems reasonable to consider the fault may be seated in the manufacturing end of the matter. I should have taken this point up with a triplicate letter to the two manufacturing houses and the Library of Congress some time back, it seems wise, perhaps, to trot it out at this particular moment since I may find it impressive material to make use of in the Baton Rouge connection should that come to pass. And so I hang tight to George Washington, even though he serves but poorly from the point of view of enlightenment just now. But the hour advances and I must eventually fold up my beard and call it a day and I shall need no rocking to induce sleep.....

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Tuesday, November 15th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Our heat wave continues but clouds kept the sun hidden during the day and tonight the wind seems to be shifting from south to westward and perhaps we will, at long last, get the rain and cold we have been promised, --a drop from 84 to 38 ought to be impressive, if it comes through on schedule.

Carolyn got off early, heading for Shreveport for some TV business and not knowing if she was heading for Marshall or Baton Rouge before day was done. It seems the Louisiana Report is enjoying considerable popularity with the public and much satisfaction on the part of the various Departments concerned but the producers are far behind in their salary payments and my advise was sought regarding a lawyer with a view to possible legal claims being filed. I recommended Whitfield Jack who has the reputation of winning all his cases and since Whit and I are friends, he probably would not hesitate to accept Carolyn's suit even though it may not involve more than a thousand dollars or so.

While gardening today, I let my mind be-stir itself a little on some details of the cook book and shall pass along my recommendations to James in a letter tonight. I think it might not be a bad idea to attach the names of some of the key people in the Natchitoches-Alexandria-Baton Rouge and New Orleans areas to some of the recipes, --not as being of their concoction but as being their favorite gumbo or meat pie or whatever. Thus people in the main cities of Louisiana will find their names in the book and that will impell at least some of them to beat the drum of recommendation.

If I can effect a feeling of a gift item rather than a prosaic utilitarian item or feeling to the thing, I have no doubt the thing could be disposed of readily enough.

I shall also suggest to James that before having the thing published on his own hook, he submit it to some established firm in view of the benefit that comes in having the services of



7678

a sales force to push the item This might give the book wider distribution although it will never amount to much outside of Louisiana anyway and I think I can stir up quite a bit of good publicity through articles ostensibly concerned not so much with the book itself as with the unexpected collaboration of two such people as its so-called authors. The killing part of it is that Clemence isn't going to be at all surprised when she learns she has written a cook book, -- so many extraordinary things have happened to her in the last year that the co-authorship of a mere cook book will probably not even register as odd.

People possessed of property in Natchitoches Parish voted today on whether the Parish should appropriate funds to be matched by the Federal Government, for the building of a hospital. All the planters appear to be against the idea, --taxes probably being the reason for their opposition. Besides, they all have ample means of conveyance to get to Alexandria of Shreveport whenever they have ailments. And so, without knowing much about the issues involved, I guess I am favor of the thing. However, I still feel that voting based on ownership of property is one of the amazing survivals of undemocratic Government in the United States. It smacks so much of Hamiltonianism, --the power being vested in the hands of propertied people that I am astonished somebody a hundred years back didn't beat the Jeffersonian drum and place the ballots in matters of this type in the hands of all the citizens since rent payers contribute to taxes just as much as the property owners, although indirectly.

From an editorial in yesterday's Shreveport Times, entitled "Why They Don't Like Nixon", I gather the Times must be guessing that Mr. Eisenhower is going to give Mr. Nixon the Presidential nod at Chicago. Since nobody does seem to like Nixon, I was impatient to read the explanation, which turned out to be so simple, -- to wit: everybody who doesn't like Nixon is a Communist. That makes it all very clear and simple although people like J. H. would be mightily startled to learn that he is a Communist. I heard Martin Agronsky interview Mr. Harriman in Albany this morning and liked what I heard. I certainly like the Harriman radio personality.

The enclosures are of no particular interest but I send them along regardless. I think I have already outlined my counter-proposals to James.....

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7679

Wednesday, November 16th, 1955.

Memorandum:

A heavy mail today but not very much of interest. I'll enclose a couple of samples but should you be pressed for time, you can put them aside unread in full realization that you have missed nothing.

Finally the cold reached us. It was 75 at 6 o'clock this morning and 65 an hour later. We are promised that it will drop to 26 tonight and I can readily believe it. But the freeshias are snugly tucked in a warm place and the bananas will simply have to collapse of their own weight after Jack Frost puts his finger on them since I haven't the means to hold up a whole forest of them.

I got around to do a little reading last night..... Here comes an interruption as a belated secretary has arrived to give me some addresses. I got around to do some reading last night. The record or the machine or something is so poor, it is difficult going but the subject matter interests me tremendously, as it begins, --this sixth volume, -- with the years between the end of Washington's military career, 1783 and his assumption of the Presidency in 1789 or 1790. These were the Mount Vernon years and the accounts of his life there, an enumeration of his guests and the operations of his plantations and his household are all most delectable. Duma Malone in the Introduction remarks that after all his painstaking research, Douglas Freeman came to the conclusion that Washington was an even greater man than he had supposed before he undertook the writing of his life. I must say I am enormously impressed by the stature of the man as it emerges. And using the word, Stature, reminds me of his statue which Houdon made of him. Jefferson was asked by the State of Virginia to cast about in Europe to find the most likely sculptor to do the statue and Jefferson came up with Houdon who undoubtedly was indeed the best. He came over to America, spent several weeks at Mount Vernon doing the job and as neither he nor Washington spoke the other's language, there



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was little or no exchange of words, --I guess there was no exchange, and, although I couldn't hear that paragraph very well, I gather that following his departure for home, Houdon never wrote Washington and Washington never wrote him, so far as is known, although their relations, if silent, were most kindly and while making the statue, Houdon lived at Mount Vernon, dined with the Washingtons and their unending stream of guests but never did linger at table but always was up and away to get on with his work as soon as he had finished his meal, while the others lingered over the port or whatever. I am under the impression Houdon lived well into the 1800's but I know nothing of his life and find myself wondering how he survived the Revolution and where he was during that excitement.

And before leaving the History Department, may I say how interested I was in the article in Life about the movie being made of Alexander, the Great. I had to laugh to myself when I stumbled over Alexander and his horse, Bucepholous, only to discover that it was a crummy statue and not the magnificent painting of which we have spoken on other occasions.

On the home front, I was delighted to hear that the Tuesday voting favored the building of a Parish hospital at about 4 to 1 in ballots cast. Now if the country would only vote to build something bigger than the American Medical Association so we could get more doctors for the nation, that really would be exhilarating.

The artist came to see me this morning, asking me to come over to see a painting she had done on a white window shade. She gets so wrapped up in doing big things that she simply can't get around to do a little cotton picking item, and to make her latest effort impressive, she had stretched the shade out its full length horizontally, and done a funeral on it. It was good but needs miles of wall space to carry it.

At breakfast, I learned from the cook that my former secretary, --Fugabou's daughter, Hellen, gave birth to a boy at dawn. This is the sixth baby boy born on the plantation within a week. The stork must be taking all his merchandise from the same basket these days.....

7681

Thursday, November 17th, 1955.

Memorandum:

There is nothing important in this memo and so if you find it next to impossible to read, just skip it, with the assurance that you will have lost nothing.

It wasn't so cold as the 26 degrees last night, as threatened. In fact it only sagged to 34 and tonight will go only to 38, for which I am thankful. There was a brilliant sun all day but the cold "northeaster" kept the thermometer down to the lower 50's, --so different from the balmy day we had in 1948.

The enclosure came in today's post, and rather late for rounding up wedding gift prior to a week from Friday. But the decision to celebrate the nuptials at this season was contrived somewhat unexpectedly and so the invitations come hard on the heels of the ceremony. But I solved the gift problem with dispatch by going over to Clemene's house where I found a very lovely Cane River funeral, --of all things for a bride, but it was one of the items that had appeared in the Saturday Gallery show in St. Louis and was appropriately framed and so met my needs perfectly. I chanced to have an extra program from the Saturday Gallery, --one of those things in two sheets which I believe I sent you some months back. The funeral is of course listed in that program and so I pasted the program on the back of the picture and wrapped it up. It does seem a little odd, too, --quite aside from the subject, that the price should be attached, as well. But it strikes me that, should the picture survive, it might be of more interest to Ann's grandchildren if this notation appeared on it. I suppose I got the habit of pasting particulars on the backs of the murals and the notion kept rocking along after the panels were all installed and other compositions came to hand. I also wrote a little note, explaining nothing about the notation on the back of the



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picture but suggesting that if the picture was too bulky to manage in a newly-weds' household, the mother of the bride might consent to harbor the thing since everyone knows that Ora and the Lady Doctor adore the Hunter canbases.

I had thought there might be something from New Orleans in response to my Saturday letter concerning the cook book business but perhaps there will be something on the morrow. I am hoping that during this interim, the Reverend Sipes will be investigating particulars regarding publication such as how many pages and how many illustrations we can use and for what price, etc. I personally favor an immediate issuance of this item and as I round up the contents at this end of the line, it is to be hoped that the manufacturing details are being worked out yonder in order that we may know what and how much we can include in our major opus in the culinary section.

Last night, over the ABC system, I heard a wonderful reading of Poe's *The Raven* by Basil Rathbone. I always liked the poem and I always liked Rathbone renditions on the stage but this was the first time I ever had heard this bit of literature presented by said actor, and I found it marvelous. Of course, right in the middle of it, some old Kansas Bible slapper horned in on the program so that I was able to get only the beginning and the end but even so, I was amazed and delighted at how much Rathbone got out of Poe. Often when entering the Chapel with the antlers above with "la croix balancante" suspended therefrom, I think of that line in "The Raven", -- "the dusty bust of Pallas just above my chamber door", and instinctively I mutter that paraphrase for the ending, -- "Pas encore", which seems to rhyme well enough with "Never more", even though the rest of the parody doesn't seem to echo so perfectly a couple dozen more gourds of medium size, perhaps 2 feet in length. These came into view, following the Jack Frost devastations in the leaf and vine sections of late. I am piling them up in big old baskets and will send them to Linda Jones for her doll making business whenever Elythe passes this way. They ought to blossom forth as dolls in Royal Street early in the year and will make glad the hearts of many a child, I hope. I enclose a couple of paragraphs which ought to start off an article for *Ford Magazine*, perhaps, or *Look*. It's not of my account but just thought you would like to see what next is cooking....

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Friday, November 18th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Winter has gone again and although cloudy, the rising temperature mouted swiftly enough to loosen one's jacket in favor of shirt sleeves by 9 o'clock. We are promised showers for the morrow.

I found Celeste in a tizzy at coffee time this morning. Somebody had given her a turkey which she had placed in a fairly substantial coop but while the wire netting was sufficiently stout to keep the turkey in, it was quite inadequate to keep Jim, the white bull dog out. Jim is a stupid dog with a single track mind which impells him to slow up and noting, not even a broom handle, when he decides on a given course. And so the servants and Celeste had been laboring the dog as he smashed away at the wire netting, and while the dog was making progress, those who would deter him were getting nowhere. But finally he was pushed into the garage and locked up, the turkey's head chopped off, and a measure of calm restored for all but Celeste who has no more notion of controlling the dogs than she has of mastering her own impulses to be forever flying from pillar to post and back again.

A letter from Mr. R. gister touches on several points which I must run through over the week end, having to do with various ingredients going into the cook book. He thinks it imperative a statement concerning no objections to the use of the Melrose Plantation name should be on file. I easily procured same from J. H., reading something like this:

"As General Manager of the Estate of J. H. Henry, owner and operator of Melrose Plantation, I heartily approve of the inclusion of Melrose Plantation in the book contemplated by Leston."

He signed signed with a flourish, --strange I've forgotten how to spell that, and said he was glad to. I felt the phrase, --



7684

"book contemplated by" was sufficiently broad so that it could be used over and over again, should the opportunity come up. I shall send this along to New Orleans, together with several other suggestions, thought up on my own hook, and then touch on the balance he mentioned at a subsequent sitting. I made so bold as to suggest that he try to determine how much material the publishers would take at just what price so we might go ahead forthwith since I favor immediate publication.

The Sage Brush operations in this area are becoming more manifest with each passing day. Camions are appearing on the highways at this bend of the river, air planes are going over head in droves and last night or rather this morning about 2:30, there was much bombs bursting in air somewhere off to the North of us. It is my understanding that the "invaders" from Lake Charles and the Gulf area will push the "defenders" all the way back to beyond Red River until the 28th, at which time the defenders will push the invaders back into the Gulf, the southward push to be accomplished in about five days so the Sage Brush may be all folded up and done with by Saturday night of December 3rd and the soldiers, - invaders and defenders, can be heading for their several bases and thence home for Christmas. December 3rd is the night of illuminations in Natchitoches for inaugurating the holiday season and if military and civilian traffic meets head on, there should really be quite a tangle.

The approaches to the proposed new bridge at Grand Ecore are being taken in hand and yesterday the contracts for the new bridge itself were let, the sub-structure contract going to some Kansas City firm at over a million dollars, the super-structure going to a Dallas firm for erection. It seems odd having one concern doing the foundations, costing more than a million and the span by another concern to the tune of another eight hundred thousand.

And so we head into another week end. And I find myself holding the thought that there may be great peace obtaining at Lyme.....

7685 [Sunday, Nov. 20, 1955]

Memorandum:

And so, having first off made an envelope, I begin this note with a feeling of uncertainty until the ribbon has reversed and assurance is thereby established that all is going to rock along smoothly.

It was a quiet weeke-end and although cool, quite pretty enough for many a pilgrim to get into the big road.

I got the ribbon fixed tonight when Carolyn passed this way, en route to Alexandria, Baton Rouge and New Orleans. As I was coming through the side gate into the gardens, from having dined across the fence, - I guess it was about 8 o'clock, Carolyn who had parked her car at the front gate, was just heading into the path I had reached. I asked her, on reaching Yucca before stopping to drop her jacket, to rig up this machine, for me and before we get to the end of this page, I suppose, the ribbon will have reached the point where it should reverse, and then we shall know for certain if we have clear sailing ahead for the next couple of months or so.







7687

I had such a pleasant Saturday night at exploring Washington doings in Philadelphia during the Winter of 1790. I had not realized before reading this book that Washington was as particular about domestic furnishings as he was about military matters. He rented the Robert Morris mansion in Philadelphia for his residence, and although he and the Morris were friends and he had often been a guest at their house, when he rented the place, he immediately had to have endless alterations made, so much like Thomas Jefferson whose changes in room proportions, etc., in the Philadelphia house he rented ran up carpenter bills in the re-doing of the place that were greater than the amount of the entire year's rental. Much evidence of Washington's interest in details has come down to us through his letters to his secretary, for while Washington was spending the summer in Mount Vernon, he was constantly in communication with his secretary in Philadelphia giving him most minute instructions as to details, even including the color of the draperies, etc., etc. Freeman remarks that although Madam Washington's comforts were looked after most thoughtfully, the executive mansion was exclusively the handiwork of her husband and it was he, not she, who gave instructions as to interior decorations, etc.

Freeman does a very brief account of Washington's journey through the Southern States in the Spring of 1791, explaining that if anybody wants to read a detailed account of the people and places he visited, a book by Henderson under some such title as "Washington's Journey Through the Southern States" or some such, may be consulted. This and one or two other similar notations on other points seems to suggest that either Freeman had intended to incorporate this journey into his book and the associates, following his death, merely put in his notations regarding source material or else Freeman, who never failed to give you endless details concerning each day's mileage, etc., in military matters, found these domestic or rather these civilian details less to his liking. I must keep the Henderson book in mind as it strikes me it might be most endless but interesting.

Forgive this sketchy memo. By tomorrow night, I am hoping the mechanics of this machine will be in full operations and that I may gallop with vast abandon up and down this keyboard.....

7688

Monday, November 21st, 1955.

Memorandum: Again I make the envelope before undertaking this memo, --the first I have used the machine since penning last night's note. I still seem to touch the keys a bit gingerly but if this sheet tracks along clearly, then I shall attack the balance of out going mail with more gusto.

The weather is marvelous, -- pure summer with the thermometer in the mid 70's and a delightful 10 mile wind blowing from the Gulf.

I had Andy to lend me a hand until noon and together we scattered cotton bolls with lavish hands. I am leaving quite a heap of them in one corner to the east of little Miss Albert's favorite painting chalet. Later in the winter I shall put up some fences running parallel to each other across which I shall place a flock of bamboo poles and so when another Spring breaks through, I shall plant plenty of gourds under this trellis, all of which ought to effect a combination that will enable gourds to grow and mature with vast opulence.

We dined across the fence today. Ezra went to Shreveport yesterday to take some sort of treatment for a sore knee. A couple of hours later, Doureatha, his wife, came to tell me she was heading out for Shreveport Sunday afternoon to see how her husband was doing. Hospital rules do not permit her to visit him before Monday noon but she wanted to go regardless and so we prepared our own breakfast and broke bread at noon and night to nobody's especial enchantment, although the food was excellent and the social surface calm enough, but that is the reason nobody is ever particularly enchanted at such a prospect, what with the inability of any one to prognosticate about the smoothness or the ruffled quality of the surface at any given hour in advance.



7689

My old friend, May Balthazar, telephoned today to

say she had Major and Mrs. Caldwell of Philadelphia for dinner and to ask if she might bring them down for a little tour. She might. The Cawdwells are mulattoes with a lightness of pigmentation that I imagine is much more on the lily side than my bronzed countenance and arms. I liked the Cawdwells although the wife was a little off center, several times using the word, Dear, when speaking directly to me. Celeste sometimes calls her servants Honeybut both Mrs. Caldwell and Celeste strike me as over-doing things a little.

I found nothing but second class mail today, meaning there will probably be a double dip of 1st calls on the morrow. Of yesterday's enclosure, I did not speak, but I did intend to remark that I thought it showed Bob in a somewhat distress mental state. I suppose this is why Patty is so anxious to have him return to New Orleans. Bob speaks of "working for his father" or some such and I had supposed his father had had to retire from business. I suppose there must be a lot of things involved in this present situation since it seems very strange that if Bob is "working" for his father, he certainly ought to be getting a generous salary since the one he enjoyed with WDSU or whatever in New Orleans must have been ample, what with his ability to support a wife and child, own a home and indulge in excursions. Poor Bob, I wish I might help him but I know not how to go about it.

I learned a little from Carolyn last night as to her various problems. She did say she is urging her brother and family to take time off and occupy Old Benita which seems odd since her brother seems to be employed at a fat salary with the oil industry. She mentioned shortages in meeting her town bills and naturally I didn't refer to the leg cabin and how it is progressing but she did say she was expecting to make the Havana expedition in January. I find it impossible to comprehend such stacks of juxtapositions and so I avoid reference to them. I suppose it is just another version of people who are always in the road finding it odd that others are forever "staying put" while the hermits are forever wondering what it is that impells the road runners to be constantly on the go, "and never the twain shall meet".

Well, the new ribbon seems to be making it alright and

7690

Tuesday, November 22nd, 1955.

Memorandum: How nice to find your nice plump envelope in today's post. It is tucked away in the armoire and I await tomorrow's dawn and the advent of a secretary with vast impatience. The school is having some kind of a entertainment tonight and a heavy of secretaries arrived about the same time in the midst of a visitation by Mrs. Wood and a friend and I accordingly had to forego the pleasure of our little chit-chat until the morrow. Fortunately, there's nothing by way of attending classes at the local schools this week, --only a nightly frolic in the gymnasium, and so I shall be communing with you at a seasonable hour and thus getting Wednesday going in the right direction early-early. One is likely to expect town visitors frequently in the days just prior to Thanksgiving and Christmas when the urbanites begin a last minute scouring of the countryside for turkeys, geese and whatever the rural regions may possess as material for fortifying the festive board.

Across the fence, the ladies are in a tizzy of delight, what with all the social doings about the Parish. I believe we dine over yonder on Thursday but Thursday seems to be playing second fiddle in the keen anticipation for the weekend which seems to hold no end of promise for amusing places and doing things. Celeste told me this morning that she is to attend the 7:30 breakfast at the Lemee House on Friday morning and then will whisk her mama to the Williams wedding at the Church, to be followed by a reception and she and Madam Regard will board the midnight train for New Orleans where they will register at the Roosevelt on their arrival and attend the wedding of Celeste's cousin, a 57 year old F.B.I. number and following that round of festivities, they will entrain again



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and get back to Hatchitoches by Saturday midnight and Sunday there's som thing or other but by then, in the recital, I had begun weel- gathering from sheer amazement that the both of them don't seem happier than when planning such escapades. Servants will dress J. H. and undress him, I suppose, during their absence and life for them will seem so worth while as the wheel of the squirrel's cage turns ever faster and faster.

A few days ago, the grapevine reported that either last Monday or Tuesday night, la Montespan with the same lady who came here with her just about a year ago on exciting night, appeared at this bend of the river, with a child of the latter lady in their company. It is said both ladies were been busily drinking pretty liberally and that they spent quite a while, visiting at the cabin of Fugheu and his family. I don't care what they do just so long as they skip this address.

Last night I finished volume VI of Freeman's biography of Washington. I learned quite a few things that interested me by way of details although the Freeman choice of details considered important or entertaining do not always coincide with the ones which I should have preferred he elaborated upon. But his compilation of facts does produce a portrait of his hero which is both illuminating and admirable and I like it.

I had always understood that Washington owned a great deal of real estate, particularly in undeveloped river bottoms in Ohio, Pennsylvania but I had never realized before that the Mount Vernon tract itself had been expanded from about 2,250 acres when he inherited it from his half brother to a little over 8,000 acres at the time of his death in 1799. This 6th volume ends in 1793 with Washington's reelection and so the volume Scribner plans for next September will obviously be devoted to his last four years in office, bringing the tale down to 1797, I think and probably a final chapter on the last two years of retirement to Mount Vernon. Our summer weather continues but we are promised a rain tonight and a cooler day tomorrow. It's going to be pleasant for me regardless, what with the tresser in my arm.

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Wednesday, November 23rd, 1955.

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Memorandum: What a pleasant morning, what a pleasant afternoon, being able to absorb your elegant letter both early and late today.

I am frankly filled at all the doings you have to report, particularly the comings and goings and potential comings and goings that swirl up & from the humming birds' vacation land. And thanks for telling me of the progress your patient is making. I am hoping his presence in the neighborhood doesn't gum up your wrestle with the great American bird on the morrow. As for the local patient, he continues in his cast which must be might uncomfortable. This new method of immobilizing the arm by keeping it elevated not only requires that the arm itself be in a cast but the cast encase the body, too, down to the waist, at least, and such a combination must make trying to get into a comfortable position for sleeping well nigh impossible.

And thanks for the clipping. Like you, so, too, was I enormously impressed by the the list of those attending the Sherwood funeral. I think I never ran across a more distinguished enumeration of people at such a gathering. One name absent from the list was that of Mrs. Guthrie McClintock, or however the name is spelled. I noticed the husband's name but not the wife's, although just as I mention this, I do recall that it seems to me, when half asleep while back, I did hear something about the wife, Katherine Cornell, as being in a Boston hospital for some lung treatment or some such.

It's so good to know that you, too, are enjoying the George Feyer renditions and I shall be liking mine the more as they are being played, thinking as I shall that perhaps you, too, may be enjoying them along about the same time. I never have heard from Nina and although I asked her if Feyer had done other recordings, of course had not heard until you advised me I shall be glad to advise you if Nina rolls another from this collection in my direction. I think the title following "Echoes of Paris" wonderful by merely beginning



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the succeeding one with the word, "Here....."

What you had to tell me about the card from Mildred was interesting. Nobody mentioned that the address was out of the ordinary and so that was news to me, too. I was impressed, too, by the news you conveyed concerning another house which devotes itself to the same kind of merchandise. Do you think it better than the one making the Lemee reproduction and if so, should I call it to Carolyn's attention or not. I have never heard her say if her relations with the one executing her films is entirely satisfactory or not.

Quite a flock of episodes have to do with Sage Brush operations have been coming to hand of late, some of them inevitable in the congregation of 140,000 men in such an area, I suppose, --such as Ivy Honeycutt, the postman of Bellewood, La., south of Hatchiteches whom I mentioned recently as having been done to death by a tank. A couple of more unusual things have come to hand on good authority, such as a soldier somewhere around Gerham who jumped creeked when he felt a sting on his left ankle and looked down to see a coral snake biting him but a second later, jumped creeked a second time when he felt a bite on the right ankle and turning about, discovered a fox taking a chunk out of him. Tests made on the fox disclose that it was not mad and in spite of the coral snake b said to be deadly usually, the soldier has survived.

The most unexpected thing for the people concerned had to do with the release of hundreds of parachutes about the suburbs of Hatchiteches on Saturday when many men and much equipment sailed down from on high. A negro family, known to one of my medical friends, was sitting about the family stove when to their utter astonishment, a big old gyp came crashing down through the roof. After all, "pennies from Heaven," is one thing. But they all leaped into corners of the room and nobody was injured and Uncle Sam, I suppose, will fix up the roof for them.

It just occurs to me that there will be no in-coming or out-going mail on the morrow and so I shall not post this memo until Friday morning. I am glad you told me of the unsealed envelope which, along with its contents, reached you safely. I suppose this circumstance, --the absence of glue, may be explained by the fact that I kept a box of envelopes here by my desk on the reading machine taboret, standing just beneath the window shelf where the aquarium stands. I recently noticed water had been leaking very slowly on to the box containing the envelopes and obviously it was this which eliminated the glue. It is so good to keep tabs on all unusual aspects of correspondence, I think, for it does give one more complete confidence that things continue to rock along as they sh

5837

7694

Thursday, November 24th, 1955.

# Memorandum:

I hope yours was as comparatively quiet a thanksgiving as mine.

A mist began at 7 this morning, developing rapidly into a shower lasting half an hour and the mists have continued throughout the day with the Weather Bureau promising more rain for the morrow. I like it. The good earth needs the moisture and the dampness will discourage road-runners.

I thought it sweet of Ann Williams to take time out last night from her round of festivities to give me a buzz. She wanted to say thanks for the Hunter canvas which she said Jack has already appropriated. She also expressed the hope that I would be coming to the wedding and the reception but I told her she would discover me there in spirit.

I awoke last night at 1:30, after having gone to sleep on a speech by Ezra Taft Henson about the farm situation and probably was awakened by the profound silence of no program coming through, as the electric current had gone off. This morning I discovered that only Yucca was without lights and a new fuse was put in and still there was no light. Then Clyde Claude Emmett Davis and Fugaboy began searching for the missing link and to my surprise and theirs, discovered a second fuse box in the Southeastern corner of the front gallery, between the flooring or ceiling and the roof. It was a strange and very much out of the way place to put a second fuse box. And the fuses themselves were of antique design, as contrasted with those in the box on the side of the building. I suppose they must be the original ones installed when the house was first wired, along about 1927, probably, and evidently the fuse makers have modernized their designs considerably since then.

Carolyn telephoned from New Orleans at 8:30, saying



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she was just heading out for Baton Rouge where she was to spend the day laboring on Delta Pictures, after which she was returning to the Crescent City to dine with Kay and James. She said she had just received good news from Philadelphia, -- and then the connection became so faint, I could make very little of what she said but I gather it was something about the Clemence story or some such and I know not if it had to do with Saturday Evening Post, Holliday or what publication. I thought she said she would be passing this way one day next week and so we shall learn then.

Irma Semperyc Willard called from Natchitoches five minutes later to ask if she might come to see me this afternoon. She might. And she did. She didn't have much news but said Carolyn had done a lot of work for her, I believe in Alexandria, on Monday and Tuesday, or perhaps Tuesday and yesterday. I can't keep up with all their flying about. Irma said she and Carolyn continue their plans to make the Havana junket on January 14th, sailing from Baton Rouge. That will be a Chamber of Commerce thing, of course, and I hope they don't have as dull a time as I think they will. It seems to me she said the round trip covers about 10 or 12 days and they will stay aboard the boat for sleeping while in Cuban waters. I believe Havana will entertain the 250 odd travelers officially, all of which sounds mighty dull unless one likes official receptions, dinners and tours. I know not why Irma is going but I understand Carolyn's object is the opportunity it will afford her to contact industrialists, particularly oil people making the trip with the idea of establishing personal relations that may turn out to be advantageous later in her photographic efforts. I think she could be right about such an investment of time and money but I would not toss dice in such a gamble since I should prefer going to Cuba, if ever, without the encumbrance of such a collection of five cent cigars. Rosalind telephoned to say Happy Thanksgiving and chatted for quite a while. She mentioned the Robert Sherwood funeral and hadn't heard about the endless list of distinguished people attending the funeral. She said, --and this was news, that she appeared in Detroit in one of Sherwood's plays, in a minor part, the star being Ann Harding whom she admired extravagantly. She said Ann is a splendid pianist, which I did not know either. She said she saw her on a TV show one day last week. And that about wraps up my Thanksgiving which certainly must make prosaic enough reading. I hope you get a chance to relax a bit, especially after the banquet.....

7696

Friday, November 25th, 1955.

Memorandum: What a delightful surprise to find your sweet note, the clipping and the lovely card in today's post.

I was never more surprised, as I have no doubt you were, --and withal delighted, to learn about the old rocking chair from Louisiana turning up in --of all places, --Versailles. I suppose it is because we are so accustomed to thinking of antiques moving westward that it comes as a shock to hear of one taking an easterly direction. Really, there's something wonderfully fitting about an American antique from the state named for the 14th Louis rocking slap back to the home town of that gentleman himself. The only jarring note about the whole article has to do with the proposal that it will come to rest after twice crossing the seas, in Park Avenue. That certainly is a felt. But, come to think of it, perhaps that is precisely what Park Avenue has been lacking all these years, one good old fashioned early American rocker and if so, it obviously couldn't have found a more remarkable one. Only you can imagine how delighted this whole business makes me, and since you do know, you alone can understand what I mean when again I say Thanks.

It rained four inches at Grand Ecure last night but we didn't get a drop although it was cloudy until noon. I saw Celeste at 9 o'clock when she returned to Melrose to pick up her mama, bent on going to the 10 o'clock wedding, following the 7:30 breakfast for the bride at the Lemee House. She said there was a single red rose on the breakfast table, set early-early by the prospective groom to grace the place of the prospective bride. She said Ora looked fine, and I'm glad she apparently has thrown off the cold which Ann mentioned was "hoovering" about her mama's head the other night when Ann telephoned.

I got a little reading done last night from a very light but charming volume by Mary F. Army, -- "Seasoned With Salt".



7697

She lives in an old home over in the Montclair section of Jersey. She mentioned an old well the family had reopened, bringing back a suggestion of the old days even though it didn't have the old gourd dipper any more, since gourds seem to be a thing of the past. Naturally I penned her a note, asking if the appearance of that line had brought her a billion gourds of the dipper variety when the book appeared in print, long before the recorded edition was brought out supposedly. I know how happy I was when I got a reaction in the form of a cane knife when I put out the word that I had none and perhaps Madam Army will get a similar kick, --if she hasn't already.

Two long letters came to hand from Dora, expressing delight at receipt of the letter signed by J. H. concerning the use of the Melrose Plantation name in publications. The letters also contained a flock of references to odds and ends about which I shall have to check over in the next few days. He seems to be entranced at the prospect of the cook book and was entranced at the small photo of the house, Melrose. I sent him, --it being one of those showing a limb of the big oak in the foreground, which little Miss Lee had had printed for me in quantity some time back. When I get around to doing the mail tonight, I must make him a list of 30 odd local names of people and places here about which might be tacked on to the title of the various recipes, such as Grandpere Augustin's Parsnip stem or Hidden Hill Potato Puff. I am so glad he is bubbling over with enthusiasm about the work and that day, probably ten times more enthusiastic, is planning to try out some of the recipes her husband and I are stirring up.

He mentions that La Storm, Farley and Irma are heading out from California for South Carolina, "going straight across the country", at the end of this month. By this, one gathers they may not be planning to stop in Louisiana but that is only a guess. He says Kay is going to be Bluff early in January but he thinks he will not and that after that, she will be or become, --I forget just how he worded it, a citizen of Louisiana, --whatever that means. As originally planned, La Storm and Irma will be at the plantation and Farley will be in New York for some time.

So things turn and so begins another week end, and doubly happy because of today's messages from Lyne and all that business about the rocking chair, and again bless you....

7698

Sunday, November 27th, 1955.

Memorandum: Much talk in social circles this week end seems to have revolved about the Williams nuptials. Several reports from near and far have come to hand and all agree it was among the more successful gatherings for like purpose within anyone's memory. It was remarkable, too, because Madam Beaufort didn't upset the apple cart as she seems to like to do almost any time and any place.

Orde telephoned me this morning and gave me a couple of side lights I thought interesting. I thought this move on her part was both original and profound. When the children had told her of their decision to become man and wife, she visited the church and took careful note of the dominant coloring in the stained glass windows. The major ones were blue-green and wine-dubonnet. The gowns for the bride's maids were according made up of the blue-green and the flower baskets and still although probably 90 per cent of the guests didn't know why, the effect thus achieved in carrying these colors down into the Church was tremendous.

Another twist that impressed everyone was the tears welling up in the eyes of the bride's maids when the service began. This was the first time a wedding service in this church had been performed inside the altar rail, --a novelty to guests long accustomed to participating in such gatherings. Ann approached the altar on her father's arm and as she reached the spot on which she was to be married, she said in a low voice which could be heard only by the bride's maids, she turned to the groom and in a low voice said: "I love you, Jack", --and then turning to the altar, and after a moment's pause, and in an equally subdued voice, said: "Thank you, God."

Is it any wonder that just at the moment, as the service began, all the bride's maids found themselves with stars in their eyes. Nobody knows it but Ann and Jack are honeymooning in Natchez.



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As for the home front, it has been comparatively quiet except for strange rumblings made by the Sage Brush doings. The moon shone from a cloudless sky, --big and round as a washtub, as I threaded my way through the gardens to sup across the fence tonight. It seemed odd I could not see the air planes which apparantly were flying but tree top height but when I passed through the side gate, I realized that what I was hearing was not planes but endless lines of tanks, scurrying along at break neck speed, coming down the Bermuda road and turning by the gin and proceeding in the general direction of Montrose.

Afternoon pilgrims reported that the highway between Alexandria and Hatchitoches was a slowly moving stream of all sorts of military vehicles, all moving South, so it must be we have already started pushing back the invaders who are eventually to be pushed into the Gulf. And using the word, military, reminds me of a scuffle at the local honkey-tonk on Saturday night. An aggressive, disagreeable youth from Magnolia plantation who is forever carrying a chip on his shoulder, and like all people thus engaged in looking for trouble, never seems to be disappointed in his search. Nobody likes him as he is always taking a swing at somebody, --just anybody, for not only does he stick out his neck with other gentlemen but hesitates not at all at pushing ladies and children about. They do say it was night funny one night to see how Clemence flew out of the place where she had gone to get a bottle of wine when this leutish person took a swing at her. Be that as it may, said youth took one swing too many on Saturday night and for his pains found himself in the hospital shortly afterward, a bullet hole in him which will not be fatal, unfortunately, and 37 stitches up and down his person. And why all this is the subject of this recital is because of the appropriateness of this aggressive person's name, --Willie Militant.

The weather remained cool over the week end but clear. The Weather Bureau had promised us thermometer readings in the 70's for today but I think it never got much above 60. A cold front is said to be sliding very fast from Canada and is likely to reach us before morning. I hold the thought a Gulf breeze may spring up and save the banana plants from crashing.....

10877

7700

Monday, November 28th, 1955.

Memorandum: Carolyn out of New Orleans suggests she might get up this way, en route for Marshall about the middle of the week. She said on Friday morning when she started for Baton Rouge or some place, she was vastly mistaken about to discover that somebody had broken into her car and removed her cameras, tripods and the Educational thing which she had shot for I. St. Willard. She had been planning to drop by the Register's menage and so she kept to that plan and telephoned the police from there and James went back with her to Pimato Alley where the car was parked, --or in nearby Antoinette's Alley. She said the police were very nice, spent about 2 hours taking down particulars, finger prints, etc., and said she should count on a better than 50 per cent chance of ever seeing any of the last articles. As the cameras represent a considerable basis of her working tools, her regret was usefully blue-ish in color, as one may imagine. But, such marvelous to relate, she eventually got all the stuff back. I was dying to inquire how and the identity of the Pirate, etc., but it didn't seem quite fair to ask additional information over the long distance and so .....



7701

we shall no doubt have the balance of the story later in the week. I asked her to bring the camera since I should like to get the one of Clemence and me sitting at this desk for the frontispiece of the impending book.

Several chaplains have indicated in town that as many of the drafted boys in the Army are homesick, it would be ever so helpful if people in town would invite them for Sunday dinner now and then. The region is famous for its hospitality but nobody inclines toward helping out in this particular fashion, what with the usual outrageous things that inevitably transpire when 140,000 men get together in any place and doubly so in a region where they are unknown. A bunch of high school kids were flagged down in Cleuterville the other night by a couple of soldiers who made them turn their pockets inside out and then ordered them (ordered them) to drive on, penniless. Fortunately all the kids lived in the neighborhood so there was no hardship although they did resent the robbery by the uniforms. A Minnesota lawyer, driving back toward home, following a lecture at the L. S. U. Law School, was flagged down by a couple of soldiers about Hatchitoches. They asked for a lift and then robbed and beat up the man and drove off in his car. I guess that was Saturday or Sunday and the car hasn't been found as yet. I must say I can't blame the ladies for hesitating about issuing invitations when such hoodlums might well be just the one coming as a guest and departing as a robber.

It goes without saying that I was entranced today on receiving the latest issue of Life and discovering on page 84 the photograph of the Illinois house of 1738 looking exactly like Yucca must have looked before the end galleries were filled in. I read the caption but hurriedly but believe it said it was French architecture. It could be, but since Yucca appears to be nothing short of an elongated African House, it never impressed me as being French and I shall assume that whoever wrote the caption for Life was perhaps talking through his hat. But, for all I know, perhaps French architects in 1738 may have been inspired by African dwellings and the wayside chaumiere was contrived along such lines. So many things I don't know but should like to know.....

7702

Tuesday, November 29th, 1955.

Memorandum: I have just written to you about the local cold snap.

There's so much talk about the local cold snap that I haven't heard a weather report out of Manhattan but I assume that you, too, are feeling the bitter blast from the Arctic. It was 26 in these parts this morning and, in spite of no clouds and no breeze, the thermometer never did get above 41 today and we are promised another 26 for tonight with slowly rising temperature on Wednesday.

What surprised me most this morning was the very thin coat of ice on the big pot. I guess the sun must have warmed up the metal during the day even though it didn't make any dent on the air, for we have had thicker ice from previous frosts.

One advantage of this cold snap is the finality with which it finished off the cannas. I have been putting off cutting them from day to day as first the red ones would put out a banner and then the yellow ones, and it seemed a great pity to nip any potential glories in the bud, as it were. But this cold snap has finished off the stems utterly and so I could think up no good reason for letting them linger on longer and accordingly most of them came down with a swish today.

A letter from the Kleisers, too intricate for the secretary in spots, seems to indicate they will be having a show at the Lemee House for two weeks, beginning December 4th. I shall be glad to see them again but I shudder a little at the visitation they promise of Charles Benkenstein and wife and five offspring, as they are scheduled to arrive about the 10th, for, as you will note from J.P.R.'s letter, the Hollywoodians and Kay ought to converge upon Melrose at about the same time and too much is too much, or some such.



7703

As I turned the page, a belated secretary passed this way, enabling me to decipher the Kleiser note so I shall enclose it.

I telephoned my friend, Mitchell Reams at the college today and got an address of a concern that may or may not further my hopes to get a dictionary recorded. Through the volume in which he sought information on my behalf, he came up with the Zietler Foundation for the Blind, or perhaps it is called the Mathilda Zietler Foundation or some such being situated at 250 Park Avenue which, as I recall, is the same address as that of The Bible Society. Be that as it may, I explained to them how it is that I feel as frustrated as a Moscow baited Cyprian, what with never being able to consult old Noah Webster's opus and asked them about turning out something that could be purchased by the blind at some nominal figure. I told them frankly that both the Library of Congress and the American Foundation seemed incapable of undertaking the job on their own respective hooks and that I certainly hoped their organization could provide us with suitable light reading. I must say I am still amazed, after all these years, that a dictionary of sorts hasn't been recorded. I must say I don't envy the person who gets the job recording the volume if ever it gets recorded but perhaps the job wouldn't be any more tiresome than some of the other stuff they toss off with such apparent abandon.

By some inexplicable turn of the dial, I picked off three entertaining programs in half hour spaces on Sunday night. Meet the Press with the Indian Ambassador on the hot seat, American Forum of the air with whom I have forgotten and Dr. Lyman Bryson with a couple of gentlemen doing Sinclair Lewis' Main Street. I suppose the Bryson program continues at the usual Sunday hour in your time zone, --around noon but what I stumbled over was being aired along about 10:30 although I knew not over which station, perhaps a Kansas City affiliate.

I'm so thankful to have this ribbon from Lyme in working order for surely it must make trying to read ever so much easier than earlier in the month. Hope you are withstanding the wintry weather and that no colds ride the Northeasters.....

7704

Wednesday, November 30th, 1955.

Memorandum: Stange doings, none of which makes very much sense when viewed from the ordinary angle. The master hovered about until the others had gone and then asked me to remove the receiver from my telephone for the evening. I gather la Montespan must be on the rampage. There's nothing either novel or new about such a request, made many a time in the past but it comes at precisely the moment when I am probably having people dial from thither and yon, all of whom, of course, must be getting busy signals.

When last I had a telephone call from Carolyn, she asked if I had appointments for Wednesday afternoon as she hoped to pause for a consultation in her jaunt from the Crescent City to Old Benita. I accordingly kept the afternoon open. I pen these lines about 8 and not a peep have I heard from that direction. I suppose she is lost somewhere in the Sage Brush department.

This morning the Editor of The Enterprise telephoned to say that the Mayor and Aldermen had appointed somebody to round up three people, not living in the Hatchitoches city limits, to judge the lighting of the homes in town on Friday night prior to the turning of the civic illuminations on Saturday night. Prizes are to be given for the most tastefully decorated homes, etc. He said that the head of the Art Department at Northwestern had been requested to nominate three persons but what he had come up with had not impressed the committee, people from New Orleans, Shreveport, etc., important in the business field, but of no particular distinction. I told him that that Marshall woman would be passing this way this afternoon and that I would ask her if she wished to serve on the committee of judges and that I would let him know before the paper went to press at 5. The radio wanted particulars, too, in order



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whip up interest in town doings for the week end fiesta. Naturally I can consult with nobody because of the telephone situation and even if they could reach me, I shouldn't be able to give them an answer except for myself, for, it seems, I was selected as one of the judges by the Board, --a mighty odd selection, it seems to me. Picture selecting a person with short-comings such as mine for such a business. But, then, come to think of it, Justice generally is considered best depicted as blindfolded so perhaps, if armed with a pair of scales and a sword, I can get by alright.

It is pleasant to report that our weather is moderating, with a low of only 37 promised for tonight. It's cloudy and drizzling and I'm hoping it may rain, we need the moisture so badly in this particular section.

I continue without any Talking Books and that gives me a perfect excuse for re-reading Le Petit Prince and having a go-round in the musical section, and I'm liking it.

Besides, the absence of reading material removes all temptation at the end of the day to indulge in literary evenings and thus I am able to go ahead on the introduction to the cook book which I am writing ten times as long as will be appropriate, proceeding on the theory that when Dora puts in an appearance to run through the thing with me, we can cut it by 75 percent and still have enough for the volume in question.

Everything seems just dandy across the fence, what with all the festivities being planned for the coming week end. I gather space has again been taken at the hotel, giving on the river front, where friends can gather to fortify themselves with strong drinks and weak sandwiches and sky rockets may be observed exploding without the inconvenience of the on-looker catching pneumonia in the looking, which is certainly an advantage. A copy of this year's program, mailed me from town on Monday, has not arrived as yet. Perhaps it will be here tomorrow and I shall pass it along for your delectation although I think it isn't anything extraordinary.....

7706

Thursday, December 1st, 1955.

Memorandum:

It sprinkled all night but to little account, and kept up the drizzle all day to the amount all told of about an inch and a half. We can take that readily enough and a few inches more but the Weather Bureau says the skies will begin clearing on Friday noon.

But the radio says the roads in this section will not begin clearing up for another five days and so the truck-tank jams will continue through the week end and traffic from New Orleans, Baton Rouge and Alexandria is being routed as much as possible by Highway 71 which is on the East bank of red river, around by Grand Ecure. And that ought to make a fine jam for the Saturday parades and illuminations.

The thermometer continues to hover, night and day, around 40 which ought to make it just dandy, what with the slow rain for those 140,000 gentlemen in uniform who are standing around waiting for the war to finish sometime next week. I suppose that's what puts the element of game in military operations of this sort, as opposed to grim warfare, --that element of Time since a definite date has been decided on to end hostilities and the soldiers being thus able to keep their eye on a magical number on the calendar, can stand the unseemly weather, what with the promise of a cessation of operations at some given point.

Carolyn telephoned sometime after 9 last night. She was in New Orleans, held there by some kind of labor and uncertain when she would be able to get away although she hoped to make the Hatchitoches thing by Friday night, although she wasn't sure. She said the Holliday thing she mentioned earlier has to do about primitive painting and one of Bob's pictures from the Hunter brush is to be used in illustrating the article. She didn't say when it was scheduled to appear. I asked her about the robbery of the contents of her car and how they caught the culprit. She said the Police Department found finger prints on the car



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that were duplicates of these on file and they sought the man out in his rooming place but none of the plunder was to be found. Finally, however, the man confessed that he was the guilty party and that instead of bringing the things home, had checked them in a public locker in the Ferry Boat Station and thus it was that everything that was stolen was found intact. She said that quite aside from being grateful that the several hundred dollars in equipment had been found, she was especially glad that all the films, many of them as yet undeveloped, should have been rescued, too, as these included those taken at the Educational Conference at Alexandria last week and, of course, it would be impossible to duplicate these and no opportunity to get shots of a State gathering of this sort for another year. The robber must have been unusually dumb to have worked without gloves in full knowledge that his finger prints were on file.

The letter from Madam Marco contains little or nothing of interest, I think, although it does seem a little odd to me that some of those atchez biddies who really are friends of hers can't take time out to drop her a card once in a while, shut in as she is and so eager for news of doings in the neighborhood where she lived so long and where so many of the people she has known still carry on. Isn't it wonderful that she has the typed copy of the B. L. C. Diary and can get so much pleasure out of going over it again.

I continue hearing tid-bits about the Williams wedding, most of which are of no importance but all of the good side. Ora is in bed with a severe chest cold and is under the lady doctor's care but she did make an effort to tell me a couple of things over the telephone today. She explained that, knowing as I do how fond she is of the Hunter creations, she need not explain what a kick she got out of it when Madam Beaufort on taking one look at the wedding gift, turned to Ann and asked her if one of her little brother's had painted it, a most natural dig, it seems to me, since Clemence told la Beaufort the other day she was too busy to paint anything for her at the moment. Ora said that following her professional visit the other day, the lady doctor, before leaving the house, was taken into Ora's library where the wedding gifts were arranged. Ora's servant told her that of all the things the lady doctor like, the one of the painting was her favorite. What a jolt that will give Beth when she hears about it, especially as her gift was a hundred fifty dollar silver serving tray.....

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7708

Friday, December 2nd, 1955.

Memorandum: Cloudy and warm with the promise for showers for the fire works tomorrow and a cold spell on Sunday.

The weather was clear enough for a few hours tonight, however and as Carolyn arrived before supper, we had an opportunity to get caught up on a couple of details regarding the Crescent City before we ran into town to judge the lighting effects contrived by home owners in town. We went all the way to Natchitoches via the river road and so encountered scant military traffic although through sections of the town there were endless lines of great trucks, all moving in a generally Southerly direction, toward Fort Polk, I suppose. In town we stopped at the Beckerman home where we picked up the Editor and his wife and proceeded on a round of the town which seemed wonderfully spread out when one is making a night canvas. Many of the displays were very nice and I shall be interested to learn the identity of some of the prize winners, as I recognized none of the homes thus honored as we made our rounds. Mr. Beckerman said General Taylor who seems to be in charge of Sage Brush was in town yesterday and made it plain that in view of today's plans for parades and night fireworks, all the Army would be out of the area, so far as trucks, tanks and so on were concerned. Mr. Beckerman told me some new wrinkle I hadn't heard about before regarding all such equipment: it seems that the price of each vehicle is painted on the tank, lorry, truck or whatever, in large figures so the tax payer in seeing the item may be reminded of precisely what the thing cost. I don't know whether this is Carlies Wilson's idea or not but I don't suppose General Motors would sponsor such an idea. I learned one mildly surprising particular about



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how things are going in the menage of the newly weds, and  
one piece of information that astonished and distressed me.

On the milder side, Kay told Carolyn that James has become  
a fervid Christian Scientist. When I heard this, I tried to thin  
back at cracks I may have made about Mary Baker Eddy and her  
theories but as my letters in that direction have always been  
tossed off with the same abandon I pen these memos, I can't recal  
what subjects I have or have not touched on. Please let me  
know if little Miss Lee should ever become an Eddy enthusiasts  
so I may avoid saying anything that might tend to upset  
her psycho-somatic balance.

The distressing news is something else again although it  
may have its roots in the mental fever of the new religion or  
health program or whatever one calls it. Apparently on the  
theory that Kay's frustrations of the past have been based  
on her contacts with a much stronger personality, James has  
strongly recommended that Kay cut off her relations  
as adopted daughter and niece of la Storm. This seems  
seemingly incredible, it is almost impossible to believe and yet I may  
have remarked in some previous memo or other that I wondered if  
the way James phrased one or two references to la Storm  
might seem to indicate a lack of affection in that  
department. --at least I think I may have mentioned this  
although it is possible I merely thought about it and  
did not jot down the impression. It seems that la Storm  
doesn't know anything about all this and long before she and  
Irma and Farley planned to head eastward, it was arranged by  
Kay, I suppose, that she would run up to see them when passing  
through the land of the Hatchitoches, as James was going to be  
too busy to get away, which must have seemed a little odd, but  
as la Storm adores James, she probably didn't ponder too long on  
his inability to get up this way. I need scarcely tell you I propose to begin turning certain  
valves and faucets in the direction of getting the mind of  
the banker back on a more even plane at least getting some of the  
starch taken out of the rigidity that sometimes seems to go  
along with those who get their physical ailments healed by  
twisting their mental operations into a pattern that  
he gets much more distress to themselves than others  
than existed prior to the psychological attack on their  
ailments. Pouring oil on troubled waters in that direction is  
my next move. I'm glad they have plenty of oil.  
Fortunately, it appears, Kay is vastly in love with James in spit  
of this inexplicable, almost, peculiarity, and if I can just get

1177

7710

Memorandum: dated Sunday, December 4th, 1955.  
I take my first lick at this typewriter  
today. I like to chat a bit with you before undertaking  
the mail and it is probably better so, since I shall probably  
grow increasingly dull as the 15th or 20th letter has been  
knocked off.

The radio on Thursday and Friday predicted rain for  
Saturday evening and so it came as a surprise to nobody except  
the guardians of the fire works. The day, Saturday, was warm  
and cloudy and at 6 p.m. the floods descended on  
Hatchitoches for about 15 minutes but nowhere else  
in the region. For some reason known only to them the  
operators, sent by the manufacturer of the feu d'artifice did  
not hang a canvas over their set pieces and so at  
6:15 it was announced over the radio that there  
would be no fireworks, although this was a little late  
to do much good for people who had journeyed from neighboring  
States and such Louisiana cities as New Orleans, Lake Charles,  
Shreveport and so on. Carolyn had remained over by request of the town  
fathers to get pictures, was accordingly well fortified with  
gear of which nobody had any use, and as I had gone in  
with her to see the display, which I had never witnessed,  
I, too, found myself as much out of place in Hatchitoches  
as the photographic traps. But we did make the most of the  
opportunity to drop by the hotel to say howdy to Celeste  
and some of her guests which included Dee Hertzog, Toosie Mills-  
pugh and scads of people who constituted a really wonderful  
gathering of precisely the same type of personality and  
nitwitism, if I may coin the phrase. But they were all very  
kind and we had a quick drink and a sandwich as the permanent  
holiday electric lights were turned on, after which we departed.  
Carolyn took off for Marshall early this morning and that was that.



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It goes without saying that I was both surprised and delighted when the Kleisers appeared on the Yucca gallery this afternoon. It was both their understanding and mine that their show was to open at the Lemee house today but as there was some confusion about dates and some meeting had been planned by some civic group for today, the varnishing date was pushed back until tomorrow.

They were particularly anxious to see the murals before going inside ucca for a chat and they lingered so long in the African House that I was beginning to think we might never make Yucca, --but we did and we had a nice long chat, too. Before they left, they asked if there was any chance of seeing Clemence and if she still lived where they had last visited her at the spillway. I had forgotten it had been so long since they were here. And when I told them she dwelt just beyond the cotton patch, they thought it would be pleasant to penetrate the bamboo and go over on foot and so I journeyed with them and the three artists were inspirational in their reunion. Everybody seemed so happy with the contact and it was pleasant to return to Yucca with the Kleisers for a glass of wine and more talk about a dozen things before they returned to town and although I have had no time to myself between their departure and now, I find that subconsciously I must have been thinking how nice it is that among most of the artists I have known, there seems to exist a certain bond of mutual respect and interest in each other that doesn't always seem to exist in some other lines of endeavor. And concurrently I seem to have recalled a paragraph in the recent biography of Mme. de Pompadour wherein the author pointed out that Louis XV never seemed at ease in the company of authors, --so different from Frederic of Prussia, --and that Louis XV, like his grandfather, Quatorze, relished the company of artists and that it was Mme. de Pompadour who gave Voltaire a hand while it was Quatorze who gave places to Moliere and Racine.

I have been thinking much between jumps today of how best I can serve in the week or ten days ahead in the strange and almost inexplicable Storm-Register business. I am bound to break down the wall that seems to have sprung up like evil magic. The fact that la Storm adores James will perhaps make it easier. The difficult nut to crack is in St. George, for I have a feeling that without realizing it, James has taken on the role, thinking he sees in la Storm the dragon of unhappiness in Kay's former life, a former unhappiness that, because of her marriage no longer exists but which St. George in his May Baker Eddy zeal may feel should and could be restored only by an utter cleavage which Kay, thank Heavens, will never agree to. I'm bound to do a bit of St. Georg-ism on my own hook against St. George's role and Heaven help me to find

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## "Brush of Glory"

Monday, December 5th, 1955.

### Memorandum:

An ideal sort of day, with ample blue sky and sunshine and the air sufficiently bracing to provide lots of ozone for out of door undertakings.

In-coming mail was scant but the enclosure speaks for itself. What in the world do you suppose the Miller-Denhome pearls can be like. Personally, if they are of value, I think Friend Miller is smart in disposing of them before her sisters and nieces have an opportunity to pull and haul at the string and as Robina has been closer to the little doctor in spirit during the past 20 years, I'm all in favor of a friend rather than the family getting the Japanese jewels.

I awakened the other day around 3:30, --a little early to arise but nevertheless slept out and for no reason on earth, I began plotting out sentences in the fashion of 19th century English translators of ancient Greek tales and I had fun thinking how odd stories of contemporary Cane River doings might sound if couched in like wordings, as for example:

".....And Glory with her silver trumpet summons one from amidst the multitude and with her own hand crowning him with laurel before the assembled throng while another on a remote, unpeopled road, unseen and unseeing, feels the brush of Glory's garment, passing close like a diaphanous breeze....." and so on and so forth.

And then I pondered on some combination of words that had been unravelling in my mind and in a few seconds unscrambled them and discovered I liked that phrase, --"Brush of Glory".

Somehow the tale took shape like this:

The private car of the railroad executive was on a siding somewhere south of Cloutierville in the rich Cane River bottoms on hot summer's day in the 1880's. While the executive was inspecting construction operations in the neighborhood, his wife, bored with



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the solitude of the lush plantations fields stretching away in every direction, was whiling away her time, daubing on a canvas. Her secret hope for years had been to secure the admiration of her husband by excelling in the painting of just one great picture. A railroad official, stationed in the neighborhood, had sent an Aunt Jemima to the car to pick up some fine linen which the executive's wife had wished to have laundered.

In the afternoon, the same Aunt Jemima returned to the car on the siding, observed the lady getting no where with her painting on which she had been laboring so frantically, and, after receiving her wage as laundress, returned to her cabin down the road. On reaching it, she discovered one pair of linen cuffs belonging to the lady, forgotten when she had delivered the clothes and she called to her spindle-legged granddaughter to skip back up the road to the siding and give them to the lady. As the little girl skipped out of the yard, her Grandmother called her back and going to an old weight clock on the shelf, extracted a brush which she handed to little Clementine, for that was the little girl's name.

"Here, child, take this here brush to that there lady up yonder. It was give to me 'way back yonder in that old Yankee war by a man what could paint mighty fine pictures, so the white folks say. He paid old Master and it was the finest thing you ever sseed before them trifling hushwhackers comes along and burns the house and everything in it. The nice man what marked them pictures, he was sort-a sick all the time, coughin' and all and with the house in ashes and everybody gone and him sick and couldn't be moved, me, I nurses him right here until one day Mr. Leeown or Mr. Lion, like some folks calls him, he says to me that he's near about ready to die and he gives me this here brush what was all he had left excepting what he was a-wearin', and he says to me that this here brush is what makes markin pictures so easy. And so I puts it in this here clock and when he dies I plum forgets it until today when I sees that lady up there a-workin' so hard at her markin. And you tell her about all this and let her have this here Glory brush."

Well, to make the story endless, Clementine delivers the brush, the lady paints a picture with it that astonishes her and enthralls her husband. And having achieved her point, the lady, before the private car departs, gives the brush back to the little girl to return to (it) to her Granmother and back into the old clock it goes and is forgotten until half a century later the little girl, now a grandmother, discovers some of the twisted tubes of paint, discarded by little Miss Alberta and, after having been given an old window shade by a half blind gentleman, jogs along at marking pictures until, the brushes having worn out, as supplied by

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3.

the gentlemen, she stumbles over the Glory brush in the old clock, she has kept with her since her Grandma's death. Her success is phenomenal from that point on, - Delgado, Garaway, African House and all but she never mentions the brush of Glory to anyone, not quite grasping herself that it is the magical instrument of the success of anyone and everyone using it, but half sensing that there's something miraculous about it nevertheless.

And the final scene comes when Clementine decides, --for what reason I didn't stop to figure out, that she has painted her last picture and even as Lion had given it to someone who had no appreciation of its true worth, so Clemence presents it as a gift to the blind man just as he leaves her cabin and, unmindful of his priceless possession, the man heads off across the cotton fields and home.....

I think such a tale, so very Grimm brothers or Hans Christian Anderson, could make quite a nice short story for some magazine or other, in the manner of Arthur Train, what with real people being all mixed up with fictional characters and episodes.

So much for "Brush of Glory" and forgive me for having run over my appoint time to finish the tale.....



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Tuesday, December 6th, 1955.

Memorandum: If I live to be a hundred, I shall never get  
accustomed to the local custom of celebrating the  
advent of the Christmas season by exploding fire crackers.  
With Sage Brush folded up and the soldiery departed, the  
banging of explosives up and down the road strikes me as  
doubly noisy. Saturday's rain may have been disappointing  
to would-be viewers of sky rockets in town, but  
the dampening of the dry grass in this section gives one  
the assurance that ignition from bursting fire crackers  
may not cause the conflagrations which might readily get  
out of hand, what with the abandon the youngsters  
toss the cracker about. It's bad enough when they put  
the giant crackers in people's mail boxes to see the lid  
torn off but that seems mild in contrast to their  
reckless playfulness in tossing these embryo bombs  
at each other, unmindful of their proximity to wooden  
buildings and grass plots. White planters operating stores  
refuse to carry such merchandise but the mulatto store  
keepers stock the stuff mightily with the result from  
now until New Year's, if the money doesn't run out, the  
youngsters will be banging away nightly and let us hold the  
thought the fire crackers merely crack and not fire.  
Today's post was fairly heavy with unimportant  
items although I was glad to hear from Mary Travis Army and  
Dr. Abernethy. These I read hurriedly as I did one from  
Dora which held a lot of particulars regarding his conference  
with a printer and a binder and containing several details  
he set down for my consideration. His conference brings  
forth news that a book about the size of the *Hola* *Nouve*  
*Oliver* opus, and containing 48 pages, can be  
made available about mid February. If I recall  
his figures correctly, the book would contain about 32  
pages of recipes and about 6 pages for title, copyright, etc.,  
for the beginning and end of the volume, plus about  
8 illustrations. The 32 pages of recipes plus the 6  
for end pages leaves me about 10 pages for an introduction  
which is a much for what he envisions including in



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the Introduction but it seems to me that the approximately 3,000 will be adequate for what I want to say, since I don't want to put into the Introduction everything planned for the eventual Melrose volume.

I shall write him tonight about two points he didn't touch upon, --the approximate prize of book of this sort and what appears to me to be a prime requisite, the matter of a jacket, carrying a picture of Melrose which seems to me imperative since this item is designed for tourist and pilgrimage trade and therefore needs a striking picture of the plantation to attract the eye of the road runner.

The artist came to see me today, definitely on the gay side. When Clemence was here on Saturday to participate in the taking of her likeness, dictating the cook book to me, she asked Carolyn and me to pass by her house with her as she wanted us to see some of the things she had been marking on window shades. There was one big funeral, painted horizontally and covering much of one side of the wall of her little cabin. Clemence guessed Carolyn would want it as she did but resisted, saying she already had about a hundred of the Hunter things and furthermore she had no money. On Sunday afternoon when the Kleisers and I passed by the Hunter cabin, I was impressed by the great void on the same wall, --and said nothing. Today when the artist appeared, I remarked to her that I had said nothing about the blank space on her wall. She broke down with giggling and said "I done told that lady when she axed me if I thought you'd ever find it out and I told her whether he ever let on or didn't, he'd sure know all about it." And so we both laughed together with me wondering the while why Carolyn should care whether I knew it or not. After all, she slaves hard enough for her money and it's nobody's business but her own if she wants to sling it at New Orleans apartments, log cabins or Hunter canvases, she certainly should be "be-holdin'" to anybody.

Clemence wanted to "borrow" some rat poison and some bulbs of the elephant ear. I gave her some of the anti rodent stuff but suggested she plant her elephant ears in March rather than December. One of these days, prior to February, I must acquaint her with the fact that she has written a cook book for plenty of people passing her way to purchase pictures will be asking her particulars about the finer points in her recipes. What a combination when one encounters such a trio as Clemence, Dora and Lestan, so far as unexpected creations are concerned.

J. H. told me this evening that he had a card from la Storm, saying she, Irma and Farley leave Hollywood tomorrow and hope to pause at Melrose to say Howdy in their trek toward South Carolina.

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Wed  
Tuesday, December 7th, 1955.

Memorandum:

It warmed during the night and the sun was so pretty this morning, I put the several pots containing the freesias out of doors to give them an extra boost in their race toward maturity. Actually, they are doing well enough under the protection of the little house there by the side gate, for their leaves have grown to a length of 6 or 8 inches and I have had to place little sticks around the edge of the pots, joined together with string, --the twigs, not the pots, to keep the leaves erect. Every day I look for some sign that a bud is in the offing. I haven't discovered one as yet but any old day we may be expecting a start in that direction.

This morning the postman was an hour late but not because of a heavy mail. Perhaps he got tangled up in the departing Sage Bursh operators. The Louisiana radio stations in their news casts advise the public to avoid various main thoroughfares for the next three or four days. It is interesting that such roads are those running North and South, leading one to suppose that the endless lines of vehicles spread out to East and West only after getting North of Shreveport or South of Alexandria. I intended reporting the other day, and may or may not have done so, that I was reminded of the transcription L.S.U. had made of an old Natchez diary at a point where the diarist had reported the death of a servant and that the doctors had performed a "port martin". In the present instance, I picked up the telephone to dial a number, only to discover some mulattoes were on the wire, and what I heard was:

"...yeah....the baby done died and the 'se goin' to 'form a topsy tomorrow'. Shades of Uncle Tom, Little Eva and Topsy.

Everything seemed lovely across the fence at coffee time this morning and Celeste read me your lovely note to her on the stationary bearing the panorama of Manhattan. She loved the card and your letter equally, and I must congratulate you on your success in contriving such an epistle that obviously pleased all around and inspired Madam Regard to remark for the



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millionth time that she thinks you are the sweetest person  
she ever knew, to which I can but add my own Amen.

I divided my time equally today between this desk and  
the canna section where the recent visitations by Jack Frost  
have cooked both leaves and stalks which must be cut down  
before cotton hull begin flying next week. This is the season of  
the year when I get no help, following as we do the old  
custom of operating but a skeleton force of field hands  
prior to the turn of the year. And then, with the arrival of  
1956, I shall find myself bogged down with too many helpers  
both because J. H. probably believes that it is good policy to  
give me some strong backs for the heavier work but also because  
he, himself, cannot think of anything for much of his  
force to do and so they can always be bounced in my direction.  
The theory somehow seems to be that just so long as they are  
out of sight from the ~~msa~~ management, whatever happens or doesn't hap  
is alright.

The time spent at my desk was given over exclusively to  
writing Introductions for the cook book. Although there  
were too many interruptions, I did toss of three, each with  
a different approach and each stressing different aspects  
of the Melrose approach to the Melrose cook book. James  
seems to envision a complete history of the plantation  
in the Introduction but I am not doing this, first off, because  
I want to use Melrose material later for the Melrose book, and  
secondly because I want to stress Clemence on the theory that  
a lot of people who may read the text, --and mighty few who  
get a cook book ever read the text, I imagine, --but perhaps  
some will and those who do may find their interest in painting quicken  
since I propose dropping more paint pots and food pots into  
the introduction, don't you think so.

Well, I shall do perhaps one more Introduction or two and  
then wrap up the whole batch and forward the whole shooting trap to  
New Orleans where the Registers can have the pleasure of  
unscrambling same, trying to piece one part into a second section  
and so on.

If would appear we might get the thing on the market this  
Spring, possibly February, and that would be nice so we could catch  
the Hatcher pilgrims who stray over into Louisiana.....

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Thursday, December 8th, 1955.

Memorandum:

And so the postman brought me an impressive package this  
morning and I was both delighted and surprised. It needed  
no covering letter, of course, but I mention that I immediately  
used my own judgement in lieu of instructions, and forthwith  
galloped across the cotton patch to the artist's house to  
put her to work on an item intended for Lyme. She was  
enchanted with what she saw as I was in receiving it from the  
postman, and so happiness reigns allaround and I hold the  
thought that the lady now in possession may be making the  
best possible use of the smaller type of board. How nice of  
little Miss Lee to be forever thinking of all those folks  
down yonder, including me.

My thoughts have turned so often in the direction  
of Lyme today, for it has been one of those hurly-burly  
businesses that in a way must be a poor facsimile in which little  
Miss Lee swirls.

But in spite of interruptions and more interruptions and too man  
visitors, morning and afternoon, I did manage to knock out  
the balance of the Introduction piece for the cook book and I shall  
be able to get that heading out for Dora on the morrow.

Carolyn telephoned from Shreveport at noon, asking if  
she might run down this evening, arriving around 4. I told her  
she could if she would stop in town and pick up my reading machine  
which has been at the shop for repairs. It is quite  
possible I shall see Carolyn between now and tomorrow but  
six o'clock has long since come and gone, the repair shop  
closed up tight and "ni sight, ni sound" of said reading  
machine or its prospective bearer.

I am hoping, in a way, that she may make it, for I assume  
she is going on to New Orleans, and if so, she can give me a hand  
at running through the Introduction manuscript for corrections and



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then take it on to the Crescent City to present it to the prospective publisher.

I should also like to ask her a couple of questions before the week end evolves, for J. H. had a card from la Storm, saying they were leaving California on the 7th which will probably bring them here about Sunday and it is understood that Kay will come up here to be with them. All I know about the Storm-Register situation is what I learned from Carolyn, and I should like to find out before seeing Kay if I am supposed to know anything about the situation or not. Possibly Kay may think that as her husband and I have known each other for years, she would be short-sighted in confiding her problem in me, but I hope not for it is quite possible that if I get the tale directly from her I may better be able to attempt some sort of an adjustment than were she to leave me in the dark. There's no point in giving that strange twist much thought before I see one or the other of the parties concerned but the Lord knows I am hoping I shall be able to upset a dab of oil on the choppy waters.

I failed to see the ladies across the fence today as they were at Church at the coffee hour. It seems today is the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, or something or other about the Immaculate Conception. I recall so vividly the first time I ever heard that this event was celebrated in December, what with the birth of Christ being celebrated in the same month. I must ask father Robel about this for while Madam Regard would be enchanted to go into the details about it for my education, still, I should fear she might think me altogether too mundane were I to bring up the question.

Sometime when I'm alone with her, I must also ask her about all that scuffle that is going on at present down at Belle Chasse, La. As I understand it the parishoners down yonder balked at going to hear Mass if said by a negro priest and the Bishop of New Orleans threatened to ex-communicate the entire Parish. When religious zeal collides with racial prejudice, sparks must really fly and I'm wondering how the local faithful re-act. I suspect it would never occur to them that they are the only two white communicants in the local Church, but perhaps it's the white priest here who saves the day for them. What a heap of scuffling the bigoted have in keeping on the one and only straight and narrow path to Paradise, especially when the 1st Commandment, the Golden Rule and the Bhop and his flock get all splintered up. Again my thanks for the happiness from Lyme to us-es.....

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Friday, December 9th, 1955.

Memorandum:

It's cold outside, along about 34 but cosey and warm inside and I am looking forward to a pleasant evening, beginning with a chat with little Miss Lee, then knocking off some mail and then listening to some Echoes of Vienna and Paris.

My day was a fairly busy one, --not so much activity, although I did go to town twice, but rather a flock of physical exercises in the gardening section and a dab of mental gymnastics.

Carolyn eventually got here last night and assisted me in running through the cook book introduction. I was delighted to be able to get it into the out-going mail this morning so James should have it by tomorrow.

The ladies across the fence headed out for the New Orleans wedding early and Carolyn offered to drive me to town to pick up my reading machine, an offer I was glad to accept. I asked her to stop at the Lemee House on our way out of town and we were greeted by the Kleisers. Their pictures grace the central hall and the rooms to right and left and some of them are really beautiful. I got Mr. Kleiser to show Carolyn about in one section while Mrs. Kleiser pointed out canvases for my delectation in the other section. Then I contrived to get the master painter to give me a little tour which afforded the chance to have a go at things.

Mrs. Kleiser told me that two colored girls were passing the Lemee House this morning when she arrived and she was so captivated by their merriment that she spoke to them, asking them to share their gaiety with them but they said they "was jus' laughin' at nuthin'". As she was just going into the house, they asked her what was inside the place and she told them some pictures and asked if they would care to see them. They said colored people weren't allow in such a fine place but she convinced them they were wrong. She said she was delighted to hear their remarks about the pictures and they declared that they were just as good as the kind folks sees in the stores.



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December 11th, 1955

Back home at 11:30, I had expected J. H. to dine with us but learned he was absent and only Dan was scheduled to join the clerk and the others and so we hurriedly decided we had forgotten something in town and drove back to get a sandwich in the drug store. Back home by 12:30, I gave Carolyn an ear as she explained a story which she had written with a friend in California a couple of years back which Hollywood had toyed with and then rejected. I pondered the problem as to its faults, recommended that she take out the forest fires, hurricanes and tidal waves and then contrived a new story in skeleton form for her to go to work on. The basis of the tale I placed on the theory that Heaven is all about us if we but have the eyes to see it, and if we do find it, we have a legacy for those coming after. The story will have to do with an old man in the marshes, a trapper, whose early mania for gold adjusts itself to an appreciation of the yellow flowers, "God's Gold", and he points with pride so often to their annual loveliness that the fellow trappers know he's a little soft in the head. And so, when the trappers start a war against the fur traders and the last fur trader appeals to the old man to harbor his daughter in the old man's cabin and to try to save his fortune in furs, the old man places the cache of furs in the bayou where only the yellow flowers grow, which he has always described to the other trappers as his treasure spot, and so when they ask him where he thinks the fur trader's cache is hidden, he says he's sure it must be in his treasure spot, and the vengeful trappers know that the man must be crazy, --and never look there. His grandson is delighted with the appreciation the young lady visiting his grandfather, has for the beautiful yellow flowers, --as a sort of sop to Hollywood, and the final shot shows the youth and maiden, gazing at the old man's favorite spot in the bayou, while on the bank above, one discovers a cross, garlanded with God's Gold, entitling above the oldster's grave. The thing should be about as long as Old Man of the Sea and perhaps the Hollywood people might make so out of this, providing them with the exotic settings and music they want to employ for a picture.

I am glad to have my reading machine again although in town they told me that it was obvious the motor needed some attention, after the tubes had been replaced, etc., and although it revolves a little slowly, I think I shall get some pleasure out of it for a while before it goes to Baron Rouge for more extensive repairs. I hope a quiet week, impends for your neighborhood and mine and that you aren't letting the stepped-up holiday pace get you down.....

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Sunday, December 11th, 1955.

Memorandum:

"Ohhhhhhh....if you could only have seen the bride's dress, -- the way it was cut at the neck and then drawn up here on the shoulder, the clips so perfectly darling and such darling veil.....etc., etc., etc."

or, in other words, the ladies made the trip to New Orleans for the wedding and made it back again and so forth and so on.

Our week end has been airish, sort of 30-ish at night, sort of upper 40-ish during the day and no pilgrims, thank Heaven.

On Thursday, I had received a card from Sister, asking me if I would send her by the doctor, coming on Saturday to look after the Cloutierville clinic for them, some of the "Sager palm limbs", meaning some fronds of the Sago palm. I would.

Her eldest son arrived on Saturday morning, --his sister and a Dr. Hall going on to Cloutierville. Lloyd had two more items, penciled on a slip of paper, his mama wanted me to send, -- "airlis and asperin vases". I have no more idea than you have as to what she had in mind. When Dr. Hall came in the afternoon, he called on me to say that as Sister had described them to him, they were big, pot-bellied things to hold flowers. I walked him about the place and he thought perhaps the oil jars in front of the African House were what she had in mind, at her daughter arrived at that moment and said that wasn't the thing. I asked her if she could describe them. She said:

"They are of metal, shaped like an apron, are fluted and stand on three legs."

We walked her about the place but she couldn't see anything vaguely approaching such a description, and then, unwittingly, I guess she let the cat out of the bag, when, in response to my inquiry as to whether she had ever seen anything of the sort at Melrose, she said:



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"Yes, I did see one once a while back but mama carried it off to Shreveport with us."

Well, that sort of took care of Saturday, but you may be sure it will not be the end of the rumpus it will probably breed.

Another letter from James, stating that the cook book can be published and sold at \$1.50 with a limp cover or at \$2.50 for a hard board cover, and what do I think... I shall respond tonight that I think we had better confine ourselves to the \$1.50 item, as we want to dispose of it to the tourist trade and that price will sell lots more, in spite of the limp cover, which always suggests a pamphlet and therefore of less value than worth, than to put an extra dollar on a cover which would bring it more into the gift item class.

I think I mentioned I got the Introduction off to him on Friday, and so I suppose he got it yesterday. He thinks publication will be in February. I think I shall get Mildred Cunningham, Thelma Kyser and Celeste together along about that time and have them stir up an "Autographing Party" at the Lemee House. My thought is to arrange the date at some time in the week so the newspapers can get a shot of Clemence initialing her book, surrounded by many society ladies, so it will get into the press on the same week with a notice that the book is on sale at Millspaugh's or where ever, and I shall make a gesture of good will toward the Lemee House by telling the Society for Preservation that a percentage on each book sold at the "Autographing Party" will be turned over to their fund.

The Shreveport and Baton Rouge papers, having "done" both authors separately in articles during the past 12th month, will probably balk at another go-round so soon but it has been quite a while since the Times Picayune has had a whack at us and so perhaps something can be trumped up for Mr. Ogden and his Dixie-Roto Section.

I gather that the Storm-O'Brien contingent will be looming over the horizon along about tomorrow or Tuesday, with Kay probably putting in an appearance along about the same time. I shall be enchanted when that shall have been accomplished and the decks get cleared for the impending festive season.....

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Monday, December 12th, 1955.

Memorandum:

How nice to find the surprise package in today's post. I am expecting the artist to pass this way on the morrow, and the two of us will have fun exploring the contents of the tubes, one set in particular seeming to be of a type unfamiliar to me. Something tells me that what with the gift item coming to hand last week to provide the canvas, today's arrival is going to impell a spurt in the Art Department that will carry the lady through the holidays with both gusto and glee.

We all, at this bend of the river, tend to hug the fire these days, what with ice on the pot and the thermometer hovering around the 40's all day and the promise of another 26 tonight.

I had a pleasant cup of coffee with Madam Regard this morning. She naturally was still delighted to talk about the New Orleans wedding and as Celeste had gone to spend the day in Alexandria, we could have clear sailing straight through.

On the military side of the Sage Brush operations, it would appear that all the soldiers have disappeared except those who are salvaging equipment, such as rolling up communication wires and so on. It would seem, however, that much telephone talk must still go on, however, for in long distance calls, the pre-Sage Brush custom of getting through out of State calls within a matter of a couple of minutes has stretched to an hour and sometimes two and a half hours. What in the world do you reckon they can find so much to chatter about.

I was surprised to learn today that Joe Henry who went to Washington, D.C., on some R.E.A. conference, is now at Bethesda Hospital where doctors are pondering whether his left eye should be removed or not. As a youth in college,



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it was thought the presence of an excess of sugar in his blood was going to cause him to go blind but that condition righted itself, and, as you know, he went through the war without difficulties. Naturally, I am holding the thought that the same miracle may repeat itself.

I did grind out a little reading on my machine last night but each turn suggests it may be the last. and I shall be glad when I can get an opportunity to send it to Baton Rouge for general repairs. I was reading Paul I. Wellman's "Gold, old and Gory" or some such title, which seems to be a trick way of setting forth a title for a book about Spanish Exploration and settlement of New Mexico and points East and West. The title reminded me of "Angels, Apes and Victorians" which was simply a dual biography of Darwin and Huxley. There must be some other reason for this vogue for confusing the prospective reader of a book by giving him no notion of its contents through the medium of the title.

I suppose you got the same sort of kick out of learning that the University of Iowa boys selected a girl of color as the Miss Iowa University for 1956. Don't you think the gal should wire Georgia's Governor her thanks, for while Iowa and Georgia appear to be miles apart both geographically and in the humanities, still, I cannot help feeling Governor Griffin's influence must have done more than almost any other person to effect the choice on the part of the Iowa youths, and, it goes without saying, I am delighted. I didn't dare mention the Iowa doings across the fence yesterday for Celeste seems all torn up about the color business at the moment. What with so many Catholic ladies, particularly in various hill billy parishes, being is a perfect tizzy about the Belle Chasse business, all of which seems particularly funny to me in Celeste's case since she and her mother don't seem to think it remarkable at all that they should be the only white communicants in a congregation of 800 or 900 colored communicants.

I thought of J. H. Williams, perhaps richest man in the Parish, the other day, when I heard that the man who last week was reported to have taken up Christina Science, hammer and tongs, is like J. H. Williams, a non-believer in tipping and never does. Isn't that a second odd twist.....

7727

Tuesday, December 13th, 1955.

Memorandum:

The weather moderated by 10 degrees, thanks to breezes from the Gulf and cloudless skies, but 10 degrees above a 45 high and a 28 low isn't too hot, especially when we are promised another sag in the thermometer for the morrow.

This was the day the cotton farmers of the nation voted Yes or No on whether price support and acreage allotment should be continued for next year. 95 ballots were cast at Melrose and the results sounded like a Nazi, Fascist or Bolshevik election, since of the 95 cast, 95 said, But Yes.

Father Callahan and Father Roble honored me with a visit this afternoon, just a friendly call, but unfortunately it came at just the hour the secretaries make their rounds and so I got no where in that section, although later I did explore the Brirawood note. For the most part, there were fat letters, however, or envelopes that feel as though the content might hold many pages, and these I didn't open, -- she as from Shelbyville and Natchez, -- the latter from Edith Wyatt Moore who, come to think of it, is probably sending me a Pilgrimage folder. As I haven't heard from her in response to letters in April, May, June and September, she really ought to have quite a lot to talk about, assuming she has brought herself around to take pen in hand..

I saw Celeste at coffee this morning but it wasn't much fun. It seems that nobody has any idea how much work she has to do, and following her frolic in Alexandria yesterday, she had guests or callers at home on her return in the later afternoon, after which she had to go to the Book Club, mentioned in other memos, where the food and favors were darling but no books were mentioned. One has so many demands upon one's time by way of labor, you simply have no idea, etc., etc., etc.

As for J. H., I didn't see him today but I understand



7728

Wednesday, December 14th, 1955.

from the clerk that he is taking things in his usual stride, although he was bound to be disappointed yesterday when the doctor examined his arm and told him he would have to leave it in the cast at least another month as it isn't healing. I naturally find myself wondering how the some what parallel case is faring.

I read a little in the Wellman opus about "Glory, God and Gold", reaching the chapter given over to St. Denis and the founding of Hatchitoches. The date is given several times as 1713. I don't recall the name of the reader of this volume but he would do well to consult Mr. Scourby for his pronunciation of Hatchitoches which he rattles off in four syllables. There's a sentence in the book which might be mis-leading, along a line that has been mis-leading in the biographies of other people. The author remarks that St. Denis died in the 1740's and was buried in his fort at Hatchitoches. I assume the author had in mind that the settlement of Hatchitoches was a fort, which it was, but it was a community, too, and the fort was up on the hill toward the college while the church yard in which St. Denis was buried was on Front Street, giving on the river, and the site of the old fort on the hill is a cemetery today while the remains of St. Denis down in the valley are beneath the floor of McClung's Drug Store, -- of all places.

I recall the biography of S.S. Prentice wherein it says he was buried "on the banks of the Mississippi", far from his New England birthplace, which is true that the State and River of Mississippi are quite a piece from New England but the Gloucester Mansion graveyard, hard by Longwood in Hatcher, is actually miles from the margin of the Mississippi River. No wonder mein lieber Heinrich of Archeological fame, had such a time casting about by means of Homer's text, to discover the location of the city of Troy.

No word as yet from the California travelers but I reckon that will come soon enough. I thought I might hear from Kay today, giving some notion as to the day she expects to establish contact with the folks but not a peep as yet.

And so things wiz along and may you not let the seasonal hurly-burly take too much stuffing out of you.....

7729

Wednesday, December 14th, 1955.

Memorandum:

The schedule is hurly-burly and I reckon this memo will turn out to be of like nature. Forgive me if I do unusually badly.

A telephone call from New Orleans came through this noon. She said she had just received word, -- I assume by mail, -- from the California contingent, asking her to have me make reservations for them in Hatchitoches, beginning tomorrow. There will be three of the travelers, of course, but she asked me to make the reservation for four, as she would like to be with them. She said James couldn't make it up here this time. I'm glad we understand why but, of course, Kay doesn't know that we know why.

She said she was leaving New Orleans sometime during the afternoon. She said she was looking forward with so much anticipation to her visit. Naturally, I suggested that she spend tonight at Melrose which would give us an opportunity to get caught up on conversation before the other put in an appearance. She seemed eager to accept. My impulse, of course, was to wait until after our visit before taking typewriter in hand but as I have no idea when she left New Orleans or may be expected to reach this bend of the river, it would seem just as well to have our little evening chat regardless since it may be all hours before she makes her bow.

I hope she will have no great difficulty in threading her way through the gardens. The clouds are low tonight and it's darker than pitch. Perhaps she will telephone me from Alexandria and that will enable me to sit on the front gate awaiting her appearance. But I'm not going to do so unless there is a call, since while sitting there, I might be missing her ring at Yucca.



7730

It's beginning to look as though I shall not be mailing a seasonal package to Lyme before the holidays are upon us. Oddly enough, some pait which usually dries in no time at all has been refusing to jell for days on end and for days on end, I have been delaying putting the wraps on the package. It's odd how one domino doesn't knock down another sometimes, isn't it.

I got around to read a little mail today, but not much. The envelope from Mrs. Moore seems to contain two letters, one of which I read, --dated along about three or four days ago. The other seems to bear an October date but I did not get around to read it as yet although I expect to do so shortly, as she says it has to do with Mrs. Brandon's status. Mrs. Moore said she forgot to mail it in October. I think she or I or both of us are changing considerably, for somehow my interest seems to lessen with the reading of each successive line.

The clerk, Pat and I had supper together last night but only this morning did I learn that Pat headed out for Washington, D. C. shortly after we had supped. Had I known he was flying up, I should have sent a note along to Joe. Pat will fly back tonight, it is said. It is further said that after leaving the hospital, Joe will come to Melrose to recuperate. I must be wrong, but that seems odd, too, what with a perfectly comfortable home in Conroe, a wife and the latter's mother, of whom he is fond, to look after him. As Miss Cammie used to say, we certainly do know some of the strangest people.

A telephone from town this morning reported that one of the Wood boys went hunting on black lake yesterday and brought down a huge goose and wanted me to joinsome college youths and maidens to dine on same at dinner tonight. I appreciated the invitation but of course declined. Come to think of it, I don't recall ever having dined on wild goose but if they are like wild duck, I could do without same readily enough. And so today rocks along and here's hoping my guest will show up eventually and I can gird my loins against another damn....

7731

Thursday, December 15th, 1955.

Memorandum:

It's cold, --around 22 degrees, but the moonless sky is heavily dusted with stars and if cold we must have, I favor it now and not at the end of March as we had last Spring.

Last night I fiddled about and fiddled some more. The only excitement during the first 2 or 3 hours after nightfall yesterday was to be called upon to drive off a stray dog that had cornered a friendly pole cat on the back gallery and give the poor skunk an opportunity to scoot under the house. The dog seemed puzzled by my lack of sympathy for his efforts and the pole cat was so quick in suerrying to safety that I don't know what reaction he manifested.

And then I returned indoors to the warmth of the fire and the slow motion reading of my Talking Books, while record after record went 'round and 'round. Finally my telephone rang. I assumed it would be Kay, calling from Alexandria to say she was approaching. Instead it was Celeste, saying that Kay had been to my house "hours ago", and not finding me, although the place was "all lit up", had come over there. I dashed in that direction and found both J. H. and Celeste in slippers and bathrobes, entertaining the guest.

I assume Kay must have tapped at the front door of Yucca and entered at the precise moment I was driving off the dog from the back gallery. I thought a dab more of daring and imagination might have saved the informal reception across the fence but that, of course, is just one man's opinion.

We had a prolonged session, on our return here and the duo must have been tired when we finally arose to journey over to the big house so the lady might collapse. ....We did have to do some takephoning, however, before then, since



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I had followed Kay's instructions when she telephoned me from New Orleans and had made the reservations she requested. On her arrival here Somewhere along the route between here and there, Kay thought that perhaps Farley might have made reservations somewhere else and so she asked me to telephone Marshall where she thought she could reach Farley. At the Ramsey residence, however, I reached Mrs. Ramsey who said the California contingent were or was at Old Bonita and there's no telephone out there. Later Aunt "illie telephoned from Texas and so we got the business unsharled in that quarter.

I did not see Kay at breakfast, as, according to my recommendation, she "lay long". She appeared here about 10:30 or 11, having had a glass of fruit juice for breakfast, since she cannot eat bacon and eggs, toast and coffee. The poor thing is still having difficulties in the physical section, and about everything anybody might eat has to be a oided or the kidneys go into a spin.

Precisely 6 months have elapsed since that festive day when Savannah, Kay had lots to confide and I had much to learn. I pen these lines at a half after mid night and so will not touch upon our sitting until a couple of leisure moments are available on the morrow, and I think you will find the notations interesting in a vaguely depressing sort of way.

Kay went to town before noon and the California travelers arrived shortly thereafter and while Farley and Irma went up and down the roads taking pictures during the afternoon, Kay and la Storm had an opportunity to converse at the motel. They telephoned me at 4:30, saying they would pass this way between 5:00 and 5:30, and they did, indeed, arrive at 7. We chated for an hour, and then we all dro e in to town for dinner which lasted long and was characterized by much entertaining exchanges of adventures and ideas.

They plan to skip out to Briarwood tomorrow morning and will spend the afternoon down here, --they say. I doubt very much if they make it before dark but perhaps merely la Storm and Kay will journey to Briarwood and Farley and Irma substitute Cane River for Briarwood, I hope. And so so turns the day and I must fold. Do hope the seasonal hurly-burly isn't getting you down and please try to go as sedately as possible in an impossible setting.....

7733

Friday, December 16th, 1955.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your marvelous letter in today's post.

The marvelous thing about hearts in tune is the fact that the duet may be pick d up at any point and neither singer is off key and one has the sensation that the singing has been duo in nature slap from the beginning of time and will run along forever, whether both participants are able or not to maintain the song jointly since the pitch will be just as perfect when resumed, what with the harmony never failing between the musical divisions.

A flock of letters came to hand in the same pot but I feel quite certain 99 percent of them are seasonal greetings and I'm happy to let them rest for the week end. I was so lucky, what with the seasonal doings, the comings and goings of the run of the mill personalities plus the California travelers, that I could read your letter straight through and so I did not mind so much that an interruption came to prevent me from more than glancing at the enclosures which I shall have the pleasure of going into on the morrow.

First off, let me respond to your inquiry regarding the tape recording item which you touched up so generously. If there's a time element involved, let the answer be No, for frankly, while I think I could imagine myself into operating one of the things, I have never had any experience with one and I am so dumb about mechanical contraptions that there's a possibility I could never manage its operations. All I have ever done is to record on tape and the wheels and reel seemed so wonderfully complicated to my non-mechanical mind that I somehow got the impression I should never know how to make the thing work. If there is not a time element involved in the matter, I shall make an effort to be-take myself to a concern dealing in such items and



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so discover through instruction to see if I could ever master the operation of such an invention which, if I could master it, would be a marvelous convenience, particularly in cases where I could find data such as addresses, quotations from correspondence and so on put down on the tape which I could turn to at leisure moments to get on with whatever is usually at hand only when a secretary is present which so often is not at the time I am free to do whatever it is I want to incorporate into whatever I am under-taking.

The travelers came back again tonight or rather this afternoon between 4 and 5 and I bounced them across the fence for a little chat with J. H. and Celeste, both of whom seem to like everybody in the group. Later the travelers, Kay and I dined in town and Farley and Irma brought me home, with Goodbyes having been said to Kay and Aunt Willie in town and Farley and Irma down here, as Kay heads back for New Orleans and they for Charleston early tomorrow morning. I shall jot down the substance of my conversation with Kay and my first impressions tonight and attach same. I want you to keep abreast with the situation, since I feel instinctively you know the people so well and are likely to hear so much more about them in subsequent memos. I leave it to your own good judgement whether the memo to be attached should be destroyed, transcribed in part or in whole (whole) or preserved. I shall write it exclusively for your information but leave it for you to decide if it should end up containing particulars that should be better omitted from the record.

Irma inclines, without knowing James, to feel there is bound to be a lot said for his side of the problem. She says she thinks Aunt Willie is quite unprepared to live alone at the Bluff and both she and Aunt Willie and Farley urged me to try to run over to the Bluff next month or in February if possible. Aunt Willie, getting me aside, said it would be so nice if we could spend a summer in some quiet place in Europe. Poor thing. Personally, I can imagine nothing nicer than spending a whole summer almost any place which she has the means to select, and South Carolina would certainly delight me just as much as Europe and would save a lot of shoe leather to boot.

The package you mentioned as heading in my direction will be arriving sometime next week. I have not addressed any to a soul and as the paint is still not dry, I continue to hold the one that will reach you only after the excitement of the season has subsided. My day has been so happy, thanks to your wonderful letter. How perfect is a world in which two people understand.....

7735

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Sunday, December 18th, 1955.

Memorandum: I guess is that more people in the United States set pen to paper than any other day in the entire year and that the tomorrow's Christmas card postal sacks will reach their maximum bulge.

Our wintry weather collapsed on Saturday and today was so warm one need no coat out of doors and it was pleasant having the doors and windows wide open. It was so pleasantly quiet today, too, for since everyone was probably busy with Christmas cards, not a pilgrim showed up.

On Saturday, a little afternoon, La Storm telephoned from iol having paused there en route from Natchitoches to Charleston. As failed to reach me, she tried J. H. at his office and, being successful, reported that she had left a very valuable jeweled cross of silver on her dressing table at the Natchitoches motel. J. H. told me he had been struck by its appearance the night before when he noticed she was wearing it when here. Efforts to track it down at the motel were unsuccessful.

On Saturday night Carolyn telephoned me from Marshall to inquire how the visit of the parties that had converged on Melrose had turned out. She said she was just back from Dallas and wanted to know if everything went alright. I told her it did. She asked me if I had had an opportunity to chat alone with Irma. I said I had not. She said that while at Old Bonita, she and Irma had an opportunity to compare a couple of notes that (and that) Irma had told her Aunt had received two letters from James while in California, one rather disagreeable, one quite ugly. I do not know if these were in response to letters addressed to him from Aunt Willie but assume they were. I am hearing from James frequently these days but never mentioned any rift between him and Aunt Willie, only reference to matters pertaining to the publication of the cook book and the line of correspondence, touching not at all on personal matters.

He returned the Introduction I had done for the cook book to me. I guess it was on Friday. It was so changed about and torn and put back together in the wrong places that I withheld my approval making acknowledgement of its receipt. My final draft of the Introduction had been done in a newspaper-ish sort of way, and rather on the light side, as this approach seems to me the most suitable for the



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Thursday, December 18th, 1955.

potential tourist trade. What he did was to employ paragraphs from other snatches I had done on the subject generally which, when placed together, gave the thing a heaviness more likely to be found in an article in the Historical Society Journal. Since he is paying for the publication, I reckon he really has the right to have something to say about the script but I shall try to persuade that he should re-consider my final draft instead of pasting together the odds and ends of correspondence which were jotted down with no to eventual publication. I shall be so interested to hear his side of the mother-in-law deal or whatever the scism is, but u I do, --and I may never hear his side of it, I cannot but feel he gummed up a situation which should never have been handled so inept. I suppose Irma and Farley probably don't feel too badly about it f all, Aunt Willie at 85 can and probably has made a new will and the bulk of the storm holdings may well be quite naturally and abru transferred from Kay to them. And still I am told one has to be bo in the South to understand colored people.

Obviously Aunt Willie doesn't blame me for having been instru in the meeting of her niece and the latter's husband. In fact, sh seems as fond of me as ever, pleading with me to run over to the B this winter sometime while Irma and Farley are there and suggestin that she and I plan to spend the summer in Europe, where ever it w suit me. And while I am both distressed and puzzled by the performances of James, I am at the same time almost as much in a quandary when I try to figure out how it is that with all the hundreds, perhaps thousands of people Aunt Willie knows, she turns to me in preference to others for companionship. All that's needed now to prove that we're all crazy is for me to elope with Aunt Willie and thus become the step-father-in-law of James and Kay or rather the adopted-father-in-law and consummate th whole business eventually by marrying Kay. Were I at Lyme at the moment, I can think of two people who could roll on the floor hours in contemplation of the strange twists such a set-up could t

Celeste told me today that last night she answered the 'phone when a familiar voice asked if she was speaking with the re of J. H. Henry. When told she was, she asked to speak with J. H. It was Sister, obviously knowing it was Celeste who had answered. Sister wanted to have all of us come to Shreveport for Christmas. Later, Juanita telephoned from Conroe to say Joe did not want her fly up to Washington and so she and her mother would come here on Thursday for the holidays. I think Celeste was enchanted at the prospect of having such guests not only because she likes them but because their presence will serve as a drag against the Shreveport I'm so glad to have the clippings. Nobody had called my attention ay of them. Bless little Miss Lee of Lyme.....

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Monday, December 19th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Another cold air mass arrived today but no clouds developed and so we got neither rain nor snow. The Weather Bureau says the "ice box" is moving more southeastward to 251 than due south and so we may escape to heavy a freeze although we are promised a low of 28 for tonight.

If one remains stationary at this bend of the river, half the world will pass this way eventually and today was a case in point when a Chicago man, just back after two years in Dusseldorf, engaged in a non-military engineering work, passed this way to see me. He has in mind doing a book about this region with Herr Beckerman of the Hatchitoches Enterprise and that's interesting news which I ought to be able to use advantageously to give a couple of punches to my photographic and publishing associates, don't you think so.

He told me about a body of water in North Dakota near the Canadian frontier called Devil's Lake. Formerly it must have been a huge body of water but has been drying up for years. An oldster in the region told him the lake once had a rather large passenger-freight steamer that operated on its waters. It was called the Minnie P. As Mr. Barry, the gentleman telling the tale related it, he rented a plane from some air port and from the air could easily see the former margin of what is now such a shrunk body of water. In making a round of all the inlets and coast line, he readily discovered old piers, long since rotted away and eventually, about 20 miles from one of these piers and toward what had formerly been the center of the lake, he discovered the hulk of the steamer, now far above the water line. It seems, according to his informant, the boat had blown up somewhere around 1900 and was almost forgotten by the time the lake had drained sufficiently for the hulk or what was left of it, had emerged. I am wondering what in the world such a boat could possibly have been operating in such a remote region at the turn of the century. Perhaps it may have served to transport people and produce to the Canadian Pacific



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railroad which may cross that neighborhood from East to West. Somehow it put me in mind of the half forgotten Ghost Towns of the Far West and along the Mississippi River.

My telephone ran along about 5 o'clock this evening. It was the familiar voice of the artist, and there was quite a sound of triumph about it. She said she had been trying to catch me all day but hadn't succeeded until that hour. Naturally, she was delighted that she had learned the combination. It was only yesterday I discovered that she doesn't know numbers and so using a dial must really be quite a problem of memory for her. I think I mentioned that her number is 8041 while mine is 8043. The trick of operating the 'phone is increased locally when one is calling another on the same line since one has to first dial the number and then hang up and wait until the phone rings and then pick up the receiver and pray the Lord the other person hasn't thought it a false alarm before you take up your receiver a second time. But now the artist seems to have mastered the operation and can no longer remember the progression of slots into which she is to put her finger and dial to get me. I suppose you may have noticed that it is easy enough to dial without looking at the gage but that is because we know how to count. Imagine how complicated the thing must be if one doesn't run up the letters from one to ten in one's mathematical knowledge.

On the home front, the same old tune seems to be repeating itself, in a slightly modified form. Along about 4:30 this afternoon, J. H. was proceeding Northward on the Bermuda Road, Claude Clyde Emmett Davis driving. At Typo Plantation where the road from the Montgomery Ferry joins the Bermuda Road, a truck shot out ahead of them and J. H.'s car was torn up but apparently neither he nor Claude Emmett Davis none the worse for wear although I suppose such a crash does little to encourage the arm in the cast to mend any faster. We know of a few of J. H.'s wrecks and that is enough, for if we knew the really number, we would probably experience a permanent case of the shakes. He was laughing about the episode at supper and said the colored boy driving the truck looked mighty frightened and the first thing he said was:

"Is yawl goin' to h ve me arrested."

Obviously the boy had no notion as to how casual is the wreck of a car in J. H.'s life. So things turn and so I turn to the out-going mail and thence to sleep.....

7739

Tuesday, December 20th, 1955.

Memorandum:

It is pleasant to report that the cold snap we were scheduled to get has again careened off eastward and the local thermometer "hoovered" around 50 today and will not sag more than ten degrees tonight. I couldn't find any Manhattan Weather Reports although I did hear that it was something like 33 degrees below zero on Mt. Washington and since New Hampshire isn't too far from the Empire State, I gather it must be "air-ish" thereabouts, too.

Strange cards continue coming my way, as they do to everyone else at this season of the year, I suppose. There's nothing strange about the cards themselves but one is so often puzzled by the identity of the senders. I had one yesterday from "Earl and Gloria Wiggin", of whom I couldn't remember ever having met. On casting about for information, --the cancellation was from Hatchitoches, I learned that the Reverend Wiggin is the Presbyterian pastor. I have met him and should have remembered the name, Wiggin. I never laid eyes on Gloria.

I was utterly stumped by another, bearing greetings from "Thedda and Morrell". The only Thedda I ever heard of was Theda Bara and she died last year. Then I investigated the cancellation stamp and discovered it was, of all places, Melrose. Imagine anybody mailing a card or letter to me in the Melrose Post Office. The next thing I know, somebody will be sending me something by Parcel Post from Melrose. My secretaries couldn't help me out with the identity of "Theda and Morrell" but the clerk could. That seems to be the people known to me as Mr. and Mrs. Youngblood, the overseer and wife. I have always known him as Mr. Youngblood and I never saw his wife but once, perhaps a couple of years ago.

Another piece of mail that was interesting today came to



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Celeste from Juanita. When Celeste read it to me, it was perfectly obvious that Juanita had been provoked when she wrote it. It was to say that she and her mother would come over here on Thursday. She said she had planned to fly up to be with Joe for at least a glimpse and perhaps stay a few days. She had made arrangements for her mother to remain in Conroe and she herself had obtained transportation by air. Just as the plane was loading, she was paged back at the airport to get a telephone call. It was from Joe, laying her out for spending money so ridiculously when it wasn't necessary, such as coming to see him in the hospital.

And another bit of information came to hand from another quarter this message by telegraph. It was from Moncks Corner, announcing that the lost cross had been discovered in La Storm's luggage. It didn't take me long to advise the motel and my colored friends whom I had engaged through various channels to track down the missing jewels.

Every time I recall what I recently learned, --that E. Roscoe is a long whiskered sympathizer, -- I cannot help giggling in my own beard. I heard him tonight and found myself wishing that he would tell me a little more about the local weather in his area and less about the details of getting the final membership to the U. N. Council seat settled, --all the details of which seem to have been hashed and re-hashed so often during the past week or so. Somehow the meticulous way he went into the matter suggested that he was recording particulars for some historical record rather than presenting a news item.

I have thought so frequently about so many details touched upon in the latest letter from Lyme. In the matter of the visual instrument recently acquired, I can well imagine the trick of enjoying it is about like that of radio. I remember so well one of my European friends, Jean Bertrand, when he first encountered American radio broadcasts, had no idea about selecting the programs and so was floored by the amount of trash he encountered because he hadn't realized that there was more than one station operating at a time and he didn't seem to realize he could tune out the trash he didn't like. Some people I know seem to approach their TV listening in much the same manner.

The latest snide remark out of Washington I have heard is to the effect that certain Republicans seem to think that if the President still can walk, he certainly can run.....

7741

Wednesday, December 21st, 1955.

Memorandum:

How nice.....It's Christmas.....regardless of the calendar, and although the Valley Electric seems to be functioning perfectly, I'm penning these lines by the light of the white white Christmas tree candle, flanked by the pine cones and the little bells, and I like everything about it, this chat by the candle light, provided by Santa of Lyme. And I am looking forward to a pleasantly long evening when I shall leave the white Christmas tree a-light but shall add electricity to the scene, enabling me to turn through again and again the elegant illustration which also came in my stocking, --beginning with the picture of the palace of the Legion of Honor and going forward and back through the Marly horses and praising God for you and you for all the happiness that is mine.

I have noted the exquisite packages for the ladies across the fence and I shall add them to their Christmas tree on the morrow. And I shall continue to marvel at the elegance of the larger package for me, so splendidly wrapped in its broad red ribbon, --a fashion of doing which I have always admired the more because I never could figure how it could be so smartly achieved.

As for the contents of the larger package, it is just perfect. In the first place, its appearance delighted me as to coloring and material, --so perfect for the winter weather on which we embark tomorrow morning at 9:12, according to the Weather Bureau. And as for fit, that is just right, too, and I have no doubt about that point for I am wearing it right now and it suits me to a T.

And best of all, the envelope with its message, --that touches me most profoundly. The card is so lovely, the scene so widely embracing of time and doings, and the Hamiltonian portraits so filled with the promise of felicities when turned to good account.

And then, adding joy to happiness, the presence of your sweet seasonal greeting to round out everything and bring such a delightful glow about the heart. Truly this is a happy Christmas and the white Christmas tree candle burning along steadily as the flame in my soul.



7742

And may I say how glad I am you mentioned the matter of the paints. They arrived, as did today's package, in perfect order and are just the checker for the artist. I am a little astonished that I failed to acknowledge their arrival but assume it may have been due to some interruption while I was in the midst of a memo. One reason I like to have our little chats at night is because there are less likelihoods of interruption but sometimes the telephone rings or a be-lated monkey-tonk-goer taps on my door and when I have something particular on my mind, I suppose I return to this machine, thinking I have already set down something which has been so much in my mind since mail time that I skip all reference to the point about which I am most concerned. Because of this circumstance, recognizing it as we do, I am hoping you will never fail to touch on subjects a second or third time, should I fail to respond. I always enjoy going over the letters from Lyme more than once, feeling that if a trifling secretary should skip a line on one go-round, there's a good chance to catching up with it on the second, --and at the same time affording me an opportunity for another chat with you.

The paints cover the entire case and are just perfect. I am wrapping them up in a special package and doing a Santa Claus in your name at the artist's house.

Today we had another example of the strange mental operations of the Bethesda, Maryland, Henry. I think I mentioned a day or so ago he had caught Juanita by telephone in Conroe, Texas, just as she was mounting the plane to fly up to see him in the hospital, denouncing her for doing things and spending money when entirely un- And so she and her mother made their plans to come here on the morrow until last night when she got another telephone from her husband, asking her why in the world she couldn't at least take a passing glance at him while in the hospital. She "enplaned" forthwith and Heaven knows what the next turn will be.

The oil on the little picture has now dried but in view of the torrent of mail currently in flood, I think I shall send your greet along early next week. In the mean time, my holidays began today, thanks to you and my evening is going to be so pleasant, what with so many evidences of affection all about me. Your various manifestations of affection, arriving all in one post, have set the seal of happiness on my Christmas and life seems so good, just knowing there is Lyme.....

7743

Thursdy, December 22nd, 1955.

Memorandum:

I heard Bob Trout night before last, speaking from Manhattan at 9:55, E.S.T., saying that the thermometer stood at 9 degrees and what was good about it was that it was 9 degrees above zero and not below.

The same polar shroud that was easing southward from the Arctic struck Fort Worth and then slid eastward shivering Tennessee, Georgia and Alabama and Florida, I guess, but somehow never did sweep over Mississippi or Louisiana, and if wants to keep doing that same thing all winter, I shall not complain.

I had such a pleasant literary evening last night. It was so pleasant to turn through the lovely pages of Illustration, -- both for what they held and for the memories of other issues which have, as we look backward, meant so much to us. The little Cardinal tray was along side, and it was so pleasant to glance from the publica to the porcelain and back again. And along side the Cardinal stood the white Christmas tree candle, its light so much more precious because it had no excuse from a utilitarian view point but stood for everything in the field of things really worth while. I know you would have enjoyed such a literary evening and somehow it almost seemed as though I felt a silent but fervent Amen.

This morning I put your packages for across the fence under the tree. The ladies were delighted and the elder got up twice to go and inspect them with obvious affection. It was all very nice.

I don't try to keep abreast with their social activities which seem to be constant. Madam Regard said they both went to a party yesterday afternoon and Celeste got home in time to turn around and go back for another at night. This afternoon I noticed cars across the fence and so assume there was social doings on the home front during the twilight hours. Where things may be scuffling about at this moment, would be difficult to guess, but that there is doings, I have no doubt. I can but marvel at the pace.



7744

The mails continue heavy, greetings from people I do not remember and from friends from whom I hear but infrequently. I regret that so many of the latter fail to put their return addresses on either card or envelope for in many cases, I should like to respond but, without something more than the cancellation, I cannot.

The New Orleans Public Library failed to send me some extra volumes prior to the holiday rush and so I find myself down to my last book. I shall not return any books until after the rush is over, what with all the postal employees have to contend with in regular mail these days. A book as yet unsampled is by De Bongh or some such and seems to be a biography of Margaret of Burgundy or of the Netherlands or some such. The setting at least will be different, what with all the stuff I have recently been digested about New Mexico, Texas and the like.

I am so glad to have the Echoes of Paris and Echoes of Vienna to hand, --they will fit in so beautifully on the reading machine. With the little white Christmas tree aglow inside Yucca and a bright waning moon making the white garden so lovely, it will be so pleasant having all these things fuse into a setting and a symphony both unique and lovely.

It is interesting to hear that "little" Robert Anthony and his family are going to have a happy Christmas. Last Friday in the middle of the afternoon, while Robert was in the woods getting fuel against the impending holidays and his wife and 4 children were calling on neighbors, their house on Little River was utterly consumed by fire. The prospect for a happy Christmas seemed pretty bleak to them, I am sure. But everyone came to their aid and to make a good go of it, the Red Cross dipped deep into the supplies for just such emergencies and tonight I learned from Robert that, contrary to the gloom of last Saturday, the approaching week end is going to be one of the nicest he can remember.

Somehow I have a feeling there is going to be happiness during this whole season both for little Miss Lee and Lestan, thanks to the perfect of their telepathy. I think out the newly weds and the lady at Moncks Corner, and I pray the Lord some of our happiness may trickle down to them.....

7745

Friday, December 23rd, 1955.

Memorandum:

How nice to find such an unexpected delight in today's post when your gay card with those little old cherubs of color jumped out of the envelope to get my week end going along the same perfection of harmony that it has been operating on during the past several days. The card is so gay and somehow as classic and fundamental in another sort of way as the Marly Horses that stand along side the one to the other here on my desk before me, with the candle light of the white Christmas tree tossing gay undulations of light on them as the keys fly along in our little even chat.

Last night I heard Bob Trout say that Manhattan had had a three inch snow in the afternoon, the suburbs receiving more. I hope the Northern sections of the city didn't get snowed under. And somehow such an atmospheric situation seems so much in line with ours of last week and so much like that obtaining today when my thermometer registered 80 degrees and the promise is for continued warmth over the week end. Somehow Christmas at such a heat level doesn't seem so very Christmasy although I must say it does have its advantages over the type of cold you all have been getting. Perhaps we might arrange a compromise at about 50 and then everything would be just right all around.

I think J. H. must have given Pat another push last night for this morning at breakfast, Pat said he thought he would fly up to see Joe, starting sometime this evening and flying his own plane perhaps as far as Memphis and there board a commercial plane. At the rate people get about these days, I suppose he may well be in Bethesda by now. As I understand it, Joe has had some sort of an operation on his eye but has no had the eye itself removed which sounds hopeful at least. My



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reports are mightyscanty since they are filtered by either J. H. or Pat who talks with Joe on the telephone and just what is what from such a source and such purveyors of news, no one can be very sure.

I felt especially fortunate tonight in having heard E. Roscoe's regular news cast, the last half of his allotted time having been given over to the presentation of the story of the Hativity, as drawn from Mathew and Mark. Perhaps because we are accustomed to his habit of presenting flash news items from day to day, it seems almost as though what he was setting forth was an event that was being reported for the first time, so skillful did he manage the business.

Above, I was remarking upon the excellence of E. Roscoe's broadcast tonight and how wonderfully effective it was to hear the accounts from Mathew and Mark regarding the Hativity reported as straight news from or by one from whom we have long been accustomed to hearing news flashes hot off the ether.

And then somebody knocked and I turned this page back into the machine, and of course forgot to turn it back as I resumed our chat.

It was Long and Marine, his wife, who had come to pick up Christmas for their several children. The Schmidts of Michigan had sent me a wonderful ginger bread house, and withal quite Christmasy in appearance, the icing being so snow-like, and the architectural embellishments of bright candies, etc. I felt the children would like it so much and it was nice to think of them as being able to convert the whole business into a feast when they were through playing with it. The gift was securely packed and I showed Log how to get it removed from its foundations without converting the house into crumbs, and I gathered that both Log and Marine were as delighted with the creation, --perhaps more so, that their children will be on Christmas morning.

And so we head into the Christmas week end. I assume there will be no out-going mail on Monday, causing one day's pause in regular receipts. My week end is going to be so happy, thanks to Lyme and May that of Lyme be equally so....

7747

Sunday, Christmas, 1955.

Memorandum:

As I jot down the date line, I instinctively glance in the direction of the moon drenched white garden, recalling the equally cloudless sky and a thermometer standing in the 80's, and find myself wondering if I hadn't better take a second gander at the calendar.

For the second time in two years, Christmas has been peaceful, -- in short the Wenks never did show up although they are scheduled for the morrow, in part or in whole, but sufficiently unto the day is the evil thereof.

As a matter of fact, we were but four at dinner and supper across the fence, and it was all very pleasant although after supper, Madam Regard whispered in my ear that "we simply had to go to town to the movies this afternoon. Celeste was so nervous with nothing to do."

My day began a little earlier than usual, what with somebody trying to get the home of a telephone subscriber who happens to be on the local party line, with endless ringing of the 'phones at five minutes of 3, and continuing on and on into the morning. But I didn't mind arising fairly early and taking care of a few odds and ends before the first kiss of dawn atop the bamboo hedge beyond the greensward, and among such little duties was the arranging of a couple of large trays which readily hold sizeable decanters and a flock of my little 35 cent wine glasses which bounce fairly well without breaking, --an advantageous quality when so many people from the plantation, both near to Yucca and in the more remote reaches of Little and Red Rivers who usually put in an appearance early on Christmas morn.

I always intend counting them as they arrive but somehow never get around to it. They started off with Smith Peace, Clyde Anthony, Gallien, Puny, Ezra, Peter, Robert Anthony, Robert Turner and so on, and I suppose there were half a hundred or more before it was time for me to go to dinner.

I was glad to see that for once the presents had already been distributed for there has always been something ridiculous about local distributions when for the most part, the gifts that come one are usually of such an unimaginative nature that it requires a heap of feigned enthusiasm to keep the business from going flatter than a pan cake. Madam Regard spoke to me of the perfectly lovely and



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very fashionable gloves she had received and I am persuaded she really did like them enormously. My gifts were handed me when I left the house after dinner. There were three packages, each beautifully wrapped. A long box which I assumed incorrectly to be a necktie. Celeste explained that it was from Jim and Mike, the bull dog and the boxer. It turned out to be a pair of socks. The second package was a little fatter but not quite so long, and that was from "Adam Regard". The third was more square and that was from Celeste. The two latter packages turned out to contain two wine glasses, --two in each package, and as they are the same kind as the non-breakable ones I like to use for ordinary occasions, I was glad to have my stock thus augmented by four.

Saturday was as warm as today and being Christmas Eve, it made it easier for those who had to fly up and down the road for shopping in town and such like. The cook was given the balance of the week off, as from Saturday noon and so I went across the fence for a sandwich along about the time the sunset and moonrise came into conjunction. But my first start didn't take me more than half way through the garden when I encountered Frank Keys, the Mayor of Hatch. He was bringing a gift and together we returned to Yucca where we could have a little cheer and he could talk with me a little about his political problems culminating in the election due on January 17th. He is always so pleasant to chat with and I hope I was able to give him a thought or two that may be useful in winding up his campaign.

Celeste, when I arrived there, had a tale that seems strange for city as small as Hatchitoches. Some girl she knows received a diamond ring from her boy friend earlier in the week. At noon on Saturday, she took it to a Front Street jeweler from whom it was purchased to have in made a little smaller. He said she could have it back within about an hour. She said she or her mother would pick it up. When she returned the jeweler's wife was in charge, her husband being out for lunch, but she told the girl that the ring was repaired and that her mother had picked it up just a few minutes before she arrived. The girl gasped and said she had been with her mother at home and it must have been given to someone else. The shop called the police but the jeweler's wife couldn't give them much of a description of the woman, with so many people on Saturday before Christmas, rushing in and out. The shop provided the girl with a new ring.

The hour advances and I have a flock of things to get me going on the morrow and so I shall fold forthwith. My thoughts have been so often at Lyme today, hoping against hope there might be at least a modicum of peace.....

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Monday, December 26th, 1955.

Memorandum: We were promised a high of 80 today when the mist lifted by 10 a.m., but they didn't lift and neither did the thermometer. And so instead of summer, we had a nice humid Spring day instead.

As was to be expected, there was no out-going or in-coming mail. Tomorrow's crop will accordingly be a bumper one, I suppose. As for the out-going a little belated Christmas package will leave at the same time this memo does. As you will notice on arrival, the package itself doesn't have any content of exception interest, although I thought you might enjoy sampling the fruit cake from Daisey in the Dell Garber, and I have placed the one or two items in paper sacks so you may the more readily dispose of the box in which they travel. Perhaps something like a pocket knife or some scissors would be convenient to cut the rather cumbersome rope that joins the two packages into a single parcel.

In this envelope or an accompanying one, I shall tuck in a couple of cards coming to hand within the past few mails. The one from Briarwood is certainly bubbling over with good wishes and good will. If you don't mind, Miss Dorman is what might be styled a bag.

A telephone call from Marshall announced that Helen is coming over from Waco the end of this week. She thought it would be nice if I might skip up to Marshall or if the two ladies slid down to say Howdy at this bend of the river. I said that some Winks were arriving this evening, --I did not know how and I had no notion as to what the weekend might stack up to, so I thought we would do well to do some prospecting before making any plans, and that so far as I was concerned, I wasn't drawing of absents myself from my present post during a Wink visitation. I also noted that whenever I get my foot in the big road, I incline to wish to accomplish some concrete project or other and while it would be delightful to frolic a little, --it seems like quite a while since I had a chat with. I should have to deny myself the pleasure if her only opportunity



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get over this way is during the time when Wenks, too,  
are are not foot-loose. Then, too, I have a flock of things  
cooking which I should like to tinker with at present. Besides,  
mix the metaphor a bit, I think more eggs hatch with one  
person concentrating one them, or when two may be keeping them  
warm in a turn and turn about, but most eggs slither off into  
the omelette stage when a third meddles with the picture,

I have mountains of seasonal greetings to be  
attended tonight but even so, I am hoping to finish  
the "Margaret of Austria" book by de Longh. I like the  
book but, like most books we like, I find it too short.  
I learned a lot of things I didn't know before but could  
have taken a bevy of additional particulars. In  
the account of Margaret's successful efforts to get her nephew,  
Charles V of Spain voted into the rarified atmosphere of  
being the Holy Roman Emperor, for example, it tells of the trem-  
endous amount of money spent to buy the five or six votes, as cast  
by the Bishops of Cologne, Mainz, etc., -- a sum equivalent to  
about thirty million dollars, which seems staggering. No wonder  
the Augsburg bankers did a land office business.

In view of the vast geographic and historical settings in  
which the lady found herself, -- such as Princess of Burgundy,  
Queen of France, Crown Princess of Spain, Duchess of Savoy and  
Regent of the Netherlands, -- and all in rather breath-taking  
rapidity, -- it seems to be some account of the various  
settings in which she dwelt, -- as for example at Amboise  
in the Loire in contrast to the Alhambra at Granada, would  
have heightened the political and personal changes which  
were her lot, -- and besides, I should have liked to read  
descriptions of these places, even at the expense of losing  
sight of the central character every once in a while. But  
for a short biography, this is a good one and so I am not  
complaining over much about it.

Several Houston residents, formerly of Cane River, were  
over this way for Christmas. Several of them, driving their own  
cars, headed out for the Lone Star State this afternoon, and  
at least three drivers were pretty high. Hence the lamentable  
traffic record established this Christmas, I suppose.....

7751

Tuesday, December 27th, 1955.

Memorandum:

Our pleasant weather continues with only the browns of vegetation  
as induced by Jack Frost, to remind one that it isn't really  
summer.

Except for a few packages and a Christmas card or two,  
my in-coming mail seems to have tapered off with wonderful speed.  
I know not how the postman finds his out-going volume  
of mail pouches but my contribution seems a little above average.  
The package for Lyme went forward this morning, I suppose, and  
tomorrow I shall be sending the dipper gourd to Mary Travis Army  
over in Upper Montclair. I meant to send it before now but when I  
contemplated the tonnage taxing transportation, it seemed to me  
anything as delicate as a gourd would have a better chance of  
survival on its journey to Jersey if it avoided the full tide  
of pre-holiday shipping.

Tonight E. Roscoe mentioned that the final death toll of  
automobile deaths for the past week end numbered 605. I am  
amazed. I am also astonished to learn from a Larry Laseur  
broadcast that Tokio with something like one or two hundred  
thousand automobiles, as against 50 million in America, seems  
to have a higher accident rate, a higher accident toll told  
than we do, and I was equally surprised to learn that of all  
countries in the world, Italy has the highest ratio of automobile  
disasters. Still, the knowledge of these facts in no way  
erases one unit from the 605 figure which we have rung up, and  
it does seem to me we could study up some way to eliminate  
a major portion of this mechanical killing.

I got around to finish the "Margaret of Austria" volume last  
night and so am looking forward to a little musical tonight. There  
much talk about the unending need for money and more money on the part  
of the European sovereigns to wage their European wars and  
how Charles V in the mid 1520's was having rough sledding to get mon-  
to pay his endless numbers of soldiers and mercenaries. I



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thinking that it was along about this time that the plunder of the Inca civilization was pouring tons of gold in on Spain I suppose it wasn't until the 1540's that old Cortez was plundering Mexico, but naturally neither the Pizarro or Cortez gold could never compensate for the wreck of the civilizations those Spanish gangster put over so thoroughly. How heavenly the Arts of that era and how devilish the potentates. How thrilling and disgusting are the pieces of baggage one encounters in that 100 year stretch. It often seems to me so strange that the religious reformation came so swiftly and the political revolutions so slowly.

Jumping from the reading machine to the radio, may I tell you that tonight I heard a program which you would have loved, and, perhaps did love, if you were so lucky as to stumble over it: - the NBC biographical sketch of Dr. Schweitzer. It wasn't so much a portrait of a man as an essay on a human being and somehow it pre-supposed the listening audience knew the particulars biographically speaking and thus offered one a mood rather than a man. And I liked every bit of it and it could have gone on and on for hours, so far as my desires might have entered into it. I was especially glad to listen to the talking given by his daughter and the piano solo rendered by her 13 year old daughter. I thought the rendition by the latter was superior to anything I should have imagined possible on the part of a 13 year old child. Perhaps she may emerge as one of Europe's foremost artists.

I must pen a line to Mr. Register, asking him what he thinks about doing an article under some such title was:

"Dr. Albert Schweitzer at Money, Mississippi".

And how pleasant it is going to be in future correspondence to employ a phrase, a little different from "poles apart" by making use of the thought expressed in the line above. Contrasting combinations seem to scurry so readily through the mind:

"Jesus and Judas" if one likes, or "Dr. Schweitzer and Governor Griffin". Truly these are remarkable times in which we live. For the Ten Commandments have been held up as a human guide for thousands of years and now in our time, a man comes along who actually puts into practice the first of these said Ten, and he is recognized by everyone as the greatest man of the Age.

But the hour advances and I must knock off a dab of mail before folding up time. It will be 1956 when this reaches your true hand. May 56 be as happy for Lyme as Lyme made Lestan in 55.

7753

1877

Wednesday, December 28th, 1955.

Memorandum: And just as I was contg atulating myself on the fact that the Christmas rush was over, a whole flock of 1st and 2nd class stuff blew in this morning, proving how wrong I could be. And just as I thought I was finished with various forms of greeting, unidentified as to sender, a couple more items came unmarked, save for cancellation, and perplexing me further as to whom I may write to express my thanks. There was one small package from some place in Wisconsin which was obviously sent on order. All I shall have to do is write a letter to Wisconsin to inquire "How Come".

There was another package from Harold's Shop, or some such in Charleston, S. C. As I have received gifts from Aunt Willie, Irma and Farley and Kay and James I suppose this might be from any one of these. The gift seems to be in the nature of a flock of canned goods of the special sardine variety type, and I guess another letter is inevitable to Harold's Shop. It seems odd people should forget to include the name of the sender, but perhaps both Wisconsin and Charleston clerks were busy as chickens on a hot griddle and that was that.

Of course I suppose I might write a letter in trilocate, sending one copy to each of the three potential dispensers of Christmas cheer, but in view of existing circumstances, the two who are "not guilty" might find such a letter a bit confusing and there's a little point in adding chaos to confusion. Our summer weather continues and tonight's moon is wonderfully big and round and golden. The radio speaks of freezing temperatures in Charleston but a high of 77 degrees for Key West and Mr. Eisenhower on his arrival there today. Like matter of policy, so the matter of the President's departure for the Sunny South seems vague and wildering. It seems to me it was but a couple of days ago it was said the President perhaps wouldn't go South in conformity to his physician's advise and the next thing we know he is sailing skyward for Key West. Somehow it reminds me of the doings in policy of the Secretary of State awfully certain but altogether unpredictable.



7754

At the present writing, an egg-nog party must be in full swing across the fence, and one made up of a curious assortment of customers. I think the discontented ladies from Magnolia were bidden, --Dee, whose husband, Mat, never goes out, and T. Sal, a widow, and Attala, another widow. Stir in to this ingredient three or four priests from across the river, plus the hostesses. Then add a dash of Wenk youths and J. H. for good measure and one comes up with a collection that scarcely can be beat. I saw Dee and Attala for a moment on Saturday evening and on departing, they remarked that they would be seeing me at the party on Wednesday night, but although Celeste had bidden me earlier in the week, she knew perfectly well that I wouldn't be among those present. It's so wonderful being at home, chavving a little chat with little Miss Lee, hammering on this machine and then getting the reading machine disk revolving, and since those across the fence are doing precisely what they want to do, I'm sure they can't be too resentful if I am guided by the same impulse.

I didn't get much news from Pat on his return from being with Joe and Juanita on Christmas Day, but from other quarters, one gathers that the eye which has been treated for glaucoma is probably going to have to be removed, with a view of eradicating one infected optic to preserve the good one. These days must be mighty long for Juanita for I imagine the patient wants plenty of companionship and, if following the usual course, isn't too easy on the nerves.

Of the people from whom I did not hear this year, perhaps the most striking one in the Department of Silence is the Rand family. Possibly they will make a round between now and New Years. Usually or, perhaps always, in the past, there has been quite a flurry as between there and here, and on both sides of the fence but the advancement in years on the part of their grandchildren and the increased urge for the whole family to get together may account for their concentration on home base. Paul King usually comes down for a few days from New York and I suppose the Jack children will also be circulating about the grandparent's home, too, which accounts for a delayed visitation. Tonight E. Roscoe again advertised his Sunday afternoon hour's chat with CBS correspondents. I should like to hear just that. I thought Robert Frost on Meet the Press was grand last Sunday.....

7755

Thursday, December 29th, 1955.

Memorandum:

I didn't know there were so many people in the world, as indicated by the continuing stream of greeting cards. I must say it is pleasant to receive them, even though there are many a sender whose identity remains unknown to me.

It does seem to me I remember having once heard from somebody in Kilgore, Texas but I had forgotten the name, Mrs. Jacques Lapin. That lady certainly came close to marrying Jack Rabbit, I must say.

I have been receiving quite a few telephone calls from pilgrims passing through Hatchitoches, asking for appointments, but I have declined to receive anybody until after the holidays, -- there will be so many friends and other people's friends passing this way.

Celeste had a telephone from Baton Rouge, the general's wife saying the General would like to run up to see J. H. and that she would like to come along, too. She said she would let them know which day they decide upon before New Years. And so, a what with so few days left, it is expected some parties will have to be broken off unexpectedly whenever the decision has been arrived at in Baton Rouge.

Joe Regard Celeste's nephew, came last night to stay a few days. The Wenk youths are still with us. What the week end will be, Heaven alone knows but it sounds like a bumper crop might be in the offing. As for entertainment, I wouldn't be able to say what



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the Wenks are up to, although I do know that gunning is among their past times. They were late for supper but made it in a little after dark, proudly displaying three beautiful yellow breasted wood peckers, --a prize which isn't likely to delight J. H. at all.

I was slightly taken a-back today when a friend telephoned me from town, saying that a lady who has been down here once or twice on pilgrimages, heard someone say last summer that I don't read newspapers and she thereupon began making clippings for my delectation, the subject matter of her efforts being over a wide range, as for example, everything the newspapers had to say over a period of months regarding the Princess Margaret romance, Senate investigations, etc., etc., and all these she has been keeping together and adding to until she now has something over four trunks full, and these she is planning to have sent down to me shortly after the 1st of the year. She undertook all this as a surprise to me and it certainly turned out to be just that. What a pity she should have expended so much energy on such a project. How she thinks I shall have more opportunity to read such a mountain of clippings when I am unable to read the newspapers, I cannot imagine. If I had but known about this, I might have recommended that if she likes to clip, she might concentrate on persons and places in either Louisiana or this section of the State. When the "surprise" of receiving these four trunks of clippings has passed, I shall be able to make such a recommendation to her. It's so odd how we find ourself in such a situation without ever having guessed we were approaching such a curious point.

The first dent in the mulatto prejudice against negro Art came to light today. Clemence had brought a couple here the other evening, --one of May Balthazar's sisters, I believe, who lives in Connecticut where she has recently married a mulatto who in coloring and facial appearance doesn't suggest that he has any of the blood of the race which, in the case of the w is unmistakably that of a heavy mixture of African tan. They saw the murals and returned the next day to ask Clemence to make small pictures of the same subject matter. Oddly enough, Clemence never seems to be able to catch anything resembling a subject done on a large canvas, --that is successfully transmit the same subject on to a smaller canvas. She has come, --slowly, --to recognize this and asked me if I thought I could help her mark a little. I told her I thought I could. And so it turns out that little Miss Lee supplies the boards and paints, Lestan supplies the drawing and Clemence does all the rest, --which sounds like a good racket, --off hand. But that will help pay the telephone bill and Miss Hunter will be the happier and, as a consequence, probably something bigger and better as a result.....

7757

Friday, December 30th, 1955.

Memorandum:

And so it was 1:30, following dinner, and I had a secretary, and the telephone rang. --John Kyser, asking if he might come down to delivery a holiday greeting and bring his sister and her husband from Illinois who had been here before but wanted to come again, five years or so after the initial go-round.

I said that 2 o'clock would be perfect. And I finished the mail and started to dive into all the trash that cluttered up the living room where I had neatly stacked various sorts of mail, and somebody tapped at the door, --the General.

And so we collapsed by the fireside and had a nice chat and before he had dreamed of moseying across the fence, the Kyser contingent arrived.

And when they left, more people were heading this way, --Cal and as they were leaving the supper bell rang. And after that I found four people awaiting my return to Yucca --problems about getting to town to see Mr. Puny who is in the hospital with some sort of a pneumonia germ, and somebody who needed advise on some Welfare procedure, etc., etc., and so the afternoon revolve about nothing, --pleasant enough, but everything rather unexpected. I suppose I shall eventually get to bed tonight but it is stacked so high with odds and ends that it may well be dawn before I get dug down to the counterpane.

Among other things, today's post brought a little torpedo shaped thing, about the size of an over-grown cigar. It contained something very light, obviously, but since it came from Des Moines, my favorite listening radio station, I could only imagine it as being something in connection with that. What it turned out to contain was the enclosure concerning Look M

I suppose the sole reason for mailing this slip of paper in fashion is to call attention to the receiver to same.



7758

Friday, December 30th, 1955.

As for the other item enclosed herewith, it speaks for itself. What a strange thought that anyone, except perhaps, Carolyn, should dream of accepting an invitation to a birthday party in South Carolina on short notice of less than a week when three of those addressed dwell in Louisiana and the fourth in Texas. I suppose the financial matter involved wouldn't worry James or Kay but I'm doubtful if Carolyn is prepared for such an exigence and I certainly am not dreaming of such a flight without air transport being provided. Sometimes I have wondered if it would be advantageous to make the safari to the low country at some convenient time. But whether I come to .....interruption.....a telephone call inviting me to join another egg nog party across the fence, I imagine.

In view of the unexpected twist relations took as between the Charleston and New Orleans households, it may well be that the South Carolina branch might want to lean heavily on the Melrose strong arm but that doesn't mean it is necessary for me to break my neck trying to reach home base by the 4th of January and so I shall respond by air to the effect that I am to be counted out, so far as that gathering is concerned.

They called Carmen Breazeale to the hospital at 4 this morning, saying her mother, Miss Camilla, was dying. The hospital telephoned me at 6:30 tonight to say that Miss Camilla is still holding out. What tremendous doings for a holiday week end, what with her sister across the hall from her in precisely the same physical condition.

It is said the balance of the Wenk tribe will put in an appearance sometime this week end, so that is about all that is required to make 1955 end in an utter hurly burly.

I suppose there will be no postal service on Monday, and if so, you will understand one day's lag in out-going memos. And so 1955 comes to a close, a poor year for agriculture a good year for the Arts, a - shall I say, a fair year for matrimony, an uncertain year for Bluff serenity, - a lucky or unlucky year for all concerned in that quarter, as only time can tell. But as for little Miss Lee and Lestan, it seems to me it was a wonderful year with the flame of affection burning just as steadily through as it has before and, please God, may ever be.....